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Historical address at the Guilford
Battle Ground

1888



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N. C. Historical Society

A HISTORICAL ADDRESS

DELIVERED BY

THE HON. DAVID SCHENCK,

SATURDAY, MAY 5TH, 1888,

AT

THE GUILFORD BATTLE GROUND.

SUBJECT:

The Battle of Guilford Court House,

FOUGHT THURSDAY, MARCH 15, 1781.

Published by "The Guilford Battle Ground Company" by request.

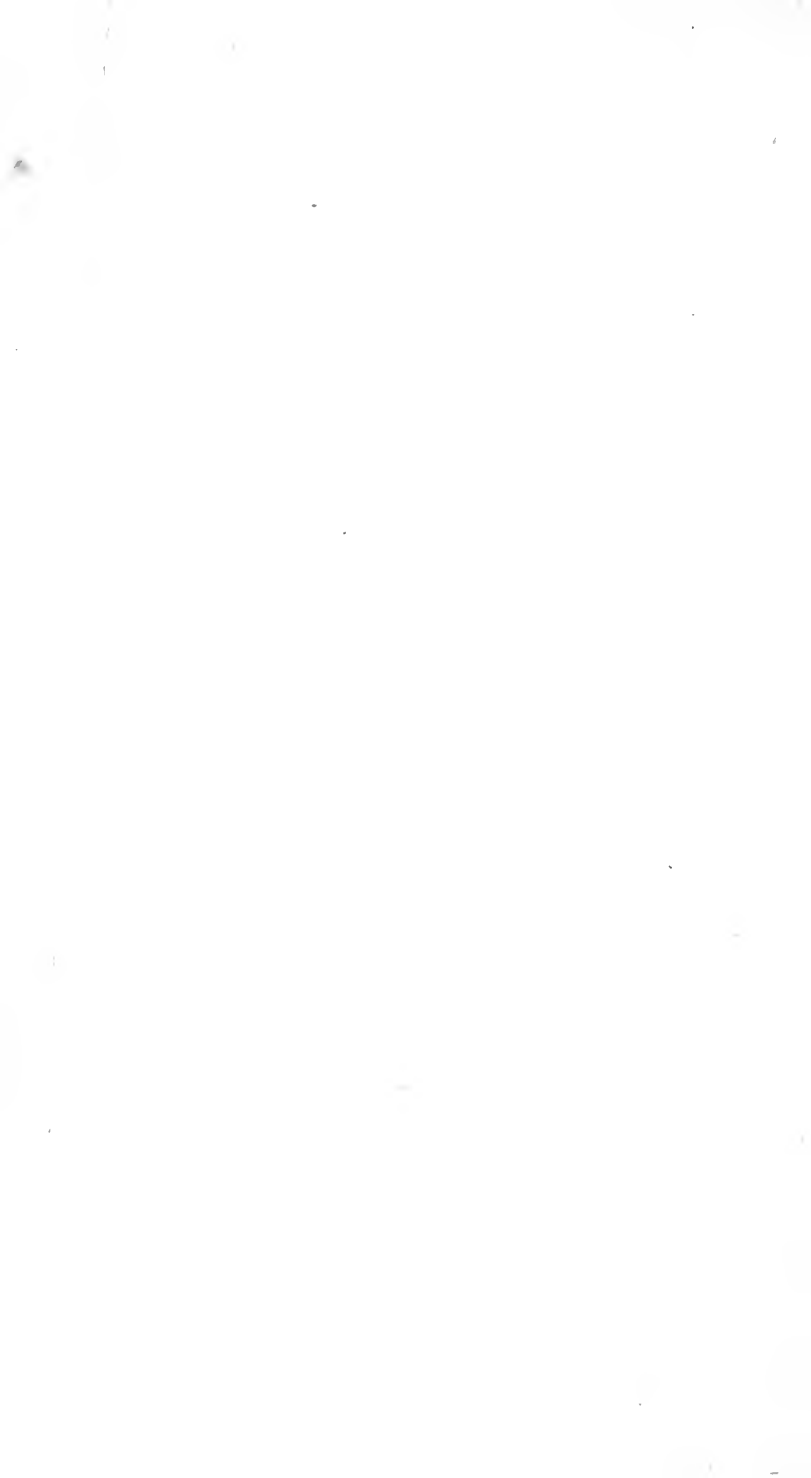
GREENSBORO:

THOMAS BROTHERS, POWER BOOK AND JOB PRINTERS.

1888.

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With the best wishes
of the author

D. Schuch

June 18 1886

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In pursuance of the following correspondence and numerous individual requests from all parts of the country, the "Guilford Battle Ground Company" has concluded to print one thousand copies of the address of the HON. DAVID SCHENCK, delivered May 5th, 1888, on the battle field of "Guilford Court House." It will be sold at fifty cents a copy, a little above cost, and the profits, if any, will be devoted to the improvement of the grounds purchased by the Company.

Very respectfully,

THOMAS B. KEOGH,

Sec'y of the Co.

Greensboro, May 15th, 1888.

GREENSBORO, May 5th, 1888.

HON. DAVID SCHENCK:

MY DEAR SIR: I heard to-day with profound satisfaction your noble and complete vindication of the North Carolina militia who fought at the battle of Guilford. For years these brave volunteers have rested under charges that dishonored them and were a source of mortification to the people of the State. To-day the stigma is wiped out, and henceforth they will stand in history as men who fought bravely and most efficiently for the cause of American independence, and did not retire from the field until they did so in accordance with the orders of Gen-Greene himself.

Deeply appreciating the importance of the facts so strongly portrayed by you to-day to the memory of these brave men and to their descendants and to all North Carolinians, as well as to history itself, I in common with the State officers present, as well as a large number of prominent gentlemen throughout the State, earnestly request that the Guilford Battle Ground Company (of which many of us are members) will cause your address to be published in pamphlet form and distributed throughout the State.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

A. M. SCALES.

GREENSBORO, May 10th, 1888.

HON. A. M. SCALES, *Governor of North Carolina*:

DEAR SIR:—I am in receipt of your letter of May 5th, in which you, in common with the State officers present as well as a large number of prominent gentlemen throughout the State, earnestly request that the Guilford Battle Ground Company will cause my address, delivered on the battle ground, to be published in pamphlet form and distributed throughout the State.

There is no deeper stain on American history than the injustice done to North Carolinians in the battle of Guilford Court House, and being impressed with this fact, I have devoted every leisure hour at my command for many months to wipe out this stain. I have not taken for granted the aspersions of those who have sought to condemn our people, nor relied on the "vain repetition" of superficial and inconsiderate writers, but have endeavored to collect the testimony of those who participated in the battle, and "know whereof they speak," and, from such testimony given by soldiers and historians, have drawn the conclusions which I submitted to my fellow citizens on the occasion to which you allude.

It is therefore a pleasure unspeakable to me that you and the distinguished and enlightened gentlemen who were present and heard my argument should pronounce it "a complete vindication of the North Carolina militia who fought at the battle of Guilford." If my vindication shall redound to the honor of North Carolina and make history speak the truth, I shall desire no greater reward than shall attach to the consummation of such a work.

I shall comply with your request by placing the address in the hands of the Company, and trust that it will soon be accessible to all who love our dear old State and sympathize with every effort to rescue her good name from those "who would defame her." I am, with great respect,

Your sincere friend,

D. SCHENCK.

The Battle of Guilford Court House.

Ladies and Gentlemen—

Fellow-Citizens of our Common Country:

Having been inspired, by frequent visits to this sacred spot, to institute a patient, thorough and impartial investigation of the truth as it relates to the history of the Battle of Guilford Court House, my friends have honored me with the request that I deliver to you, this day, a historical address upon this great and decisive battle.

The task is no easy one, as the events which led to it were so varied and important, the incidents of the battle so numerous and interesting, and the results which flowed from it so blessed and glorious to the American people, that it is difficult, by selection even, to condense the story in the space of a popular address. I, therefore, bespeak your indulgence if I shall fail to meet your expectations or to collate all that might be said in regard to this fruitful theme.

Let us approach it with calmness and listen with patience, as I shall endeavor to tell the story.

As a North Carolinian, with a heart full of love for his native State and "swelling with gladness whenever we name her," I shall endeavor to repel the slanders which the jealousy and ignorance of others have heaped upon her and to get out of the ruts of "vain repetition" into the smoother road of investigation and inquiry, not taking for granted what one or two men have said in their haste or their wrath, and which a hundred have repeated, but venturing to produce the cotemporaneous facts and de-

ducing from them my own opinions, I shall submit them, with confidence, to your reason and judgment. I shall not detract from the record of others nor "set down aught in malice" of any one, but attempt to portray the scenes of more than a century ago, as they appear to me, through the long vista which intervenes.

We stand to-day on sacred soil, in the very midst of the place where, on Thursday, the 15th day of March, 1781, was fought, what I verily believe to be, in its results, by far the most important battle of the revolutionary war; it was the beginning of the end. The retreat of Cornwallis from the field was the acknowledgement, by a proud and reluctant heart, that the attempt to subject the Southern States and end the rebellion was a failure, and with sorrowful step he followed his inevitable doom to the prison walls of Yorktown where on the 19th day of October, 1781, he became a humiliated and conquered captive.

The splendid army of Burgoyne, coming in all the pomp and pride of discipline and numbers had been beaten and captured at Saratoga in October, 1777; the army of Sir Henry Clinton had been compelled to seek the shelter of its fortifications and the protection of the British fleet at New York. British invasion at the North had failed in the fall of 1779, when the English government determined to transfer the seat of war to the South and make a desperate and final attempt to overrun the Carolinas and Georgia and separate them from their sister colonies; hoping, with this foothold, to follow up their victory with the subjection of Virginia and the ultimate conquest of the country. Lord Germain had carefully prepared the plan of the campaign and marked the particulars of its cruel progress. North Carolina was to be invaded from Wilmington and the Cape Fear as a basis of operations and supplies; South Carolina was to be

conquered by first capturing Charleston and then keeping the people of the coast in subjection by the threat of turning loose upon them the numerous slaves of that region of the State; the upper country was to be kept in awe by the menace of Indian invasion from the frontiers, and all the horrors that this calamity suggested to their minds.

By these means it was expected that the spirit of the rebellion would be crushed and the loyalists become numerous enough to hold the country in submission to the government.

Sir Henry Clinton sailed for the South and began the siege of Charleston on the 9th day of February, 1780, and ended it on the 12th day of May by the capture of General Benjamin Lincoln and the American army under his command. North Carolina had gone to its rescue, and every regiment of the Continental line of North Carolina Regulars, under General Hogun, numbering about one thousand men, had been embraced in the capitulation. A few only of the officers who had lost their positions by a consolidation of the regiments in May, 1778, had escaped from the fate of their comrades.

The fall of Charleston left the South without an army to oppose the invaders; the citizens of that State were panic stricken with this sudden and overwhelming misfortune. Their civil government entirely dissolved, their Governor became an exile in North Carolina, the loyalists embodied in every part of the State; the stoutest Whigs, even those who had served in the Continental Congress, submitted to the conqueror* and renewed their allegiance to the royal government.

All regular opposition to British power ceased. Marion, with a few devoted men, took refuge in the swamps of the Pee-Dee and Sumpter and his handful of followers

*Baneroft. Vol. 5 p.393.

sought the fastness of the mountains, that last refuge of patriots in every land, as the only hope of safety.

The whole State was prostrate, and the King rejoiced and the parliament exulted that at least one State was thoroughly reclaimed and that their plans were a success.

Sir Henry Clinton returned to New York to enjoy the congratulations of his friends and the glory of his victory, leaving Lord Cornwallis to command the Southern army and push his conquest into North Carolina.

The English outposts were extended to Georgetown, Camden and Ninety-Six, and proclamations, breathing vengeance and cruelty to the Whigs, were issued. Plunder and bloodshed and anarchy rioted over the land unrestrained.

The Provincial Congress was filled with gloomy forebodings; but rallied sufficiently to organize a small band of regulars from Maryland and Delaware, under the Baron DeKalb to occupy North Carolina and co-operate with its militia for defence. In an evil hour to American independence General Horatio Gates was entrusted with the command of this skeleton army and it soon fell a victim to his rashness and folly at Camden, where he was routed and his army almost destroyed. The struggle now seemed ended in the South. The nation looked on with amazement and horror at this swelling tide of misfortune which seemed to be swallowing up every hope of liberty as it spread over the land.

The government was paralyzed; its armies were captured and beaten; its treasury was empty; its regular soldiers were languishing in the filthy prison ships of the enemy; the loyalists were organizing for rapine and revenge and the savage was painting for the war path and for blood.

Cornwallis, willing to carry out the unrelenting and merciless plans of Germain, selected Lieutenant-Colonel

Banistre Tarleton of his cavalry and Colonel Patrick Ferguson, who led a body of picked infantry, as the instruments of his oppressive purpose.

The former made himself conspicuous by the massacre of Buford's command in the Waxhaws and received the commendations of his commander for the bloody work.

Ferguson's mission was to organize the tories and overawe the Whigs in the up country districts, which meant to hang and imprison those who refused to take the oath or resisted his power. A thousand loyalists had joined his battalion of Regulars and marched from Ninety-Six through the upper counties of South Carolina, unopposed, into Rutherford and Burke counties in North Carolina. His will was law and his command was death. Right and mercy were disregarded and the people fled in terror and dismay before his advance. Bold in his movements, profane and denunciatory in his proclamations, he went forth breathing threats upon all who withstood his authority. Whole families and neighborhoods, gathering what they could in the moment of danger, fled from his approach.

The men of Burke, who had dared to strike his outposts, were unable to oppose his advance and fled across the mountains to the Holston and the Nollichucky where they found refuge with Shelby and Sevier. There Colonels Charles McDowell of Burke, Isaac Shelby of Washington, and "Nollichucky Jack," as Col. John Sevier was familiarly called by all North Carolinians, agreed to form a volunteer corps of their mountain soldiers and march to the rescue of their friends; to hunt for Ferguson and to revenge themselves upon him and his marauders. At Quaker Meadows, the home of the McDowells, on the Catawba, two miles North of Morganton, on the 30th day of September, 1780, assembled these hardy soldiers; men who had felled the forests, destroyed the wild

beasts which surrounded them and driven back the Indians who opposed the march of their civilization.

They knew nothing of the stamp tax and the use of tea but they found men seizing their cattle, plundering their houses and insulting their wives, and they determined on revenge.

Cleaveland from Wilkes, Winston from Surry, Ham-bright and Chronicle, from Lincoln joined the McDowell's, Charles and Joseph, from Burke. Campbell from Virginia came to the rescue, Hill, Lacy and Williams from South Carolina joined the pursuit.

On the 7th day of October they brought Ferguson to bay at Kings Mountain.

They were ignorant of military tactics and knew less of the science of war. They had been trained to shoot the deadly Deckhard rifle and to close with the knife and tomahawk which they carried in their belts. They fought from tree to tree and were vigilant and quick in all their movements. Officers, as well as men, were armed alike and during the combat they fought on an equality, only expecting the control of an officer when decisive movements were to be made. No printed circulars announced their order of battle; there were no glittering uniforms to inspire authority, each was dressed in the hunting shirt of the day, with his powder horn on one side and his bullet pouch on the other, with knife and hatchet in his belt.

They were drawn up in line and told that they were to form a circle around the hill and press forward to the centre until Ferguson was killed or captured.

Campbell of Virginia who had been honored with the nominal command had but few words to say. He instructed each regiment and battalion as to the position assigned it, and, waiting till they formed the magic circle, he advanced to the head of his column and gave but one

command: "Now, boys shout like hell and fight like devils!"

In a moment the war whoop of the frontier echoed in the forest and the keen crack of the rifles mingled with its sound. From tree to tree they advanced and with every discharge of their rifles a British soldier fell. Ferguson amazed at their reckless daring, ordered his regulars to charge with the bayonet and push them back.

The charge came and the riflemen retreated before the bayonet; but as the British turned to regain their line a volley thinned their ranks one-third, and the "shouting devils" were again at their heels. Thrice this charge was repeated until only twenty regulars survived the dreadful carnage.

The circle had become smaller each time, Winston had reached one summit and Hambright another, leaving Chronicle a corpse behind them. The portly form and stentorian voice of Cleaveland were seen and heard near their camp exhorting his men to "shoot low and aim well." Williams fell at the head of his men, but Lacy and Hill Rushed over his prostrate form to revenge his death.

The whistle of Ferguson, the signal for a charge, was heard in the din of battle. The Whigs knew his signal and his checked shirt that he wore in battle, and were watching for him to come in sight. In a moment, wielding his sword in his left hand and spurring his white charger to a furious speed, he made a dash for life and freedom.

One Gilleland, of Sevier's command, a North Carolinian, first discovered his approach, and though wounded and sick, he raised his rifle, but it failed to fire; then turning to Robert Young, a comrade near by, he shouted, "There is Ferguson—shoot him!" Young, perceiving the prey, raised his pet rifle to his shoulder and replied:

"I'll see what Sweet Lips can do." The music from "Sweet Lips" had not yet brought back the echo from the rocks when Ferguson fell, unconscious, with a bullet through his brain. North Carolina was avenged.

The battle was ended, the white flag ran up and with the exception of hanging a dozen or so of rapacious Tories, the carnage ceased. Not a single man of Ferguson's command escaped.

This victory of undisciplined troops, who had sprung like fabled soldiers from the ground; who had organized their regiments without a General, who marched without a commissary or quartermaster; who fought and bled without a surgeon to dress their wounds; who neither asked nor received a soldier's wages; who came, unbidden, as volunteers, to save a prostrate country and to punish a devouring foe; these untutored men of the Carolinas and Virginia were the first to hurl back the invaders and strike dismay into their ranks—the first to "relight the torch of freedom" on their beacon hills and call to their saddened countrymen still to hope.

While we honor the comrades who fought by their sides, let the facts be imperishable as the eternal hills, from whence came these men, that this was a North Carolina victory—conceived and organized by North Carolinians, with two-thirds of the soldiers who executed it from the Old North State. That the vanguard of attack was led by Winston and Chronicle, from Surry and Lincoln, the latter of whom yielded his youthful life a heroic sacrifice to the land he loved.

Cornwallis was at this time in Charlotte, smarting with the sting of "The Hornets" who surrounded him. His couriers were shot down and his news gatherers slain. The defeat and death of Ferguson was first announced to His Lordship by the joyful Whigs who shouted it in the ears of his pickets and lighted bonfires in sight of his camp.

Every shadow now seemed a soldier to his distempered vision; every soldier seemed a troop rising out of the invisible distance beyond. Exaggerated accounts of the gathering backwoodsmen, who seemed innumerable and invulnerable, were circulated through his camp. Dismay was in every countenance. On the night of the 14th of October, though weak and sick, he fled in the darkness and plunged through the historic mud of the Waxhaws, never resting his feet till he reached a place of safety at Winnsboro, South Carolina. Here he sat down to realize the mutations of fortune, and to learn that North Carolina was yet unconquered and determined to be free.

It taught him another lesson—that his bloody tragedies would be avenged; that his oppressions could not continue with impunity. Above the roar of battle at Kings Mountain, his soldiers had heard the ominous words “Tarleton’s quarters” and before the hand of vengeance could be stayed a hundred crouching loyalists had fallen victims to the spirit of retaliation. From this time forth Cornwallis behaved as a soldier, not from choice, but from necessity and personal danger.

But we must hasten on with our story.

On the 14th day of October, 1780, General Washington, acting under the powers delegated to him by Congress, announced his selection of Major-General Nathanael Greene to succeed General Gates, and on the 4th day of December he assumed command at Charlotte.

He found at Charlotte scarcely eleven hundred troops of whom only eight hundred were fit for duty. Many of them with garments so tattered that they could not appear on parade, but under those rags were indomitable spirits. Here was the fragment of the first Maryland, under Major Anderson, the only organized force that retreated from Camden, one hundred of the “Blue Hen’s Chickens,” Kirkwood’s Delawares, and a small remnant of

Colonel Hal. Dixon's battalion of North Carolinians, "who fought as long as there was a cartridge in their pouches" and who have been made immortal in history by the pen of Lee, men who fought over the dying body of DeKalb. These men were patriots and soldiers, though covered with tatters and rags and only waited the first opportunity to capture a wardrobe from the enemy.

Greene, finding that this region was exhausted of provisions, divided his forces. Taking his main army to "Camp Repose" on the Pee Dee, in Anson county, he detached General Morgan, on the 16th day of December, across the Catawba to watch the enemy and strike a blow if opportunity offered.

His force consisted of 320 men detached from the Maryland line, a detachment of Virginia militia of 200 men under Triplett and Tate who had seen hard service, and Col. William Washington's cavalry, about 80 men. In all about 600 men. These were to be reinforced by the militia of that section.

He was joined by Major Joseph McDowell, of Quaker Meadows, with 190 of his Kings Mountain veterans from Burke and Rutherford counties* and 120 men from Mecklenburg and Lincoln counties† 70 militia from South Carolina that came with Pickens, who had just escaped from prison and about 100 Georgians under MacCall and Cunningham. In all 1055 men of whom at least 310 were from North Carolina or more than one-half of all the militia.

Tarleton's force consisted of 550 dragoons, (which constituted his Legion) about 500 regulars and two pieces of artillery, giving him greatly the advantage in numbers, discipline and weight of arms over Morgan.

* Johnson's Life of Greene, p. 362.

† Bancroft Vol. 5, p. 190.

It is important that we give the plan of this battle, which had so much influence over General Greene in the arrangement of his troops at Guilford Court House. Morgan formed two lines of militia in front, the first line being on each side of the main road on which Tarleton was approaching, the right commanded by Colonel Cunningham, of Georgia, the left by Major Joseph McDowell, of Quaker Meadows, North Carolina.

The second line of militia was under the command of General Francis Pickens and the third line was composed of the regulars and 200 Virginia militia, who were veterans in service.

This you will hereafter observe was exactly General Greene's order of battle at Guilford Court House.

Before the battle began and while Tarleton was forming his troops, in sight, General Morgan walked along the lines of the militia, exhorting them to firmness, instructing the first line to "select the men with the epaulettes" "and announcing that" all he asked of them was "TWO DELIBERATE DISCHARGES AT FIFTY YARDS AND THEN TO RETIRE BEHIND THE REGULARS.*" Judge Johnson, in his life of Greene, states this fact with great particularity and emphasis, but strangely neglects to state that this same order was given by General Greene to the militia at Guilford Court House.

The plan was successful. The militia killed so many of the British officers that when the enemy reached the third American line they were in confusion for want of orders and officers and fell an easy prey to the discipline and courage of the regular troops. So great was their demoralization that a whole regiment threw down their arms and fell upon the ground and begged for quarter. The battle had been won already by the militia, of whom a large majority were North Carolinians.

* Johnson's life of Greene, Vol. 1, d. 378.

The mountain men had destroyed Tarleton's command, whom they hated as the Vandals of their day, and the men of Mecklenburg had made good the resolutions of May, 1775.

At that time Cornwallis lay to the Southwest at Fishing Creek, in the North Western portion of what is now York county, South Carolina, about twenty miles distant, waiting for Tarleton to return in his triumphal march with Morgan a captive at his heels; but Tarleton returned under whip and spur, a beaten and disgraced leader. He had won his last victory at the butchery of the Waxhaws and the sun of his fortune set in darkness at Yorktown. Thenceforth he was despised but not feared. Cornwallis was again appalled at the destruction of his finest troops by the undisciplined militia of North Carolina, and paused in his camp for twenty-four hours before he regained his self-possession, and then too late to intercept the "old waggoner" who was retreating in haste through Rutherford, Burke and Lincoln with his prisoners and booty. This stupid and fatal delay of Cornwallis made Morgan's retreat into North Carolina and his junction with the main army at this spot on the 11th of February, possible.

I have not time to relate the thrilling incidents of this wonderful retreat of Morgan—almost equal in skill and courage to the retreat of the Ten Thousand. Superficial and superstitious writers, of so called history, have been so astounded at its thrilling incidents that they have ignored the wisdom and courage of Morgan and Greene and ascribed their escape to supernatural intervention. They have declared that in turn as the Americans crossed the Catawba and the Yadkin and were in the very jaws of the British Lion, God sent the flood of waters and separated them from their pursuers. God has been good and merciful to this blessed land, but has not performed miracles

to save it as yet. He raised up General Greene as the military deliverer of the South and inspired him with sagacity to have the Dan, the Yadkin and the Catawba rivers explored, and to have every ford marked and every boat secured, and to General Greene's superior knowledge of these streams and the roads of the country is due this masterly retreat. Morgan was two days ahead of Cornwallis when he crossed the Catawba* at Sherrill's Ford and rested for his Lordship to approach, and the American forces gave him battle as he waded the river at Cowen's Ford. On the 31st of January, 1781, Greene rested, too, at the Yadkin, and calmly wrote his dispatches while British cannon balls were unroofing the little cabin that sheltered his table. He crossed the Dan in ferry boats that waited, a week, his coming and the enemy were unable even to harass his rear. It is one of the wonders of literature that this superstitious view of the great retreat has so often been repeated as to be received by the masses of our people as history. It is about as silly and groundless as the assertion made by this same class of sensational writers that the North Carolina militia fled here without firing a shot, and to our everlast-

*Johnson's Greene, Vol. 1, pp. 405-406.

NOTE.—Morgan reached the Catawba River, at Sherrill's Ford, on Wednesday, the 24th day of January, 1781, and crossed it. He had kept Pickens further up the river. Pickens crossed the Catawba, with the prisoners on the way to Virginia, at Island Ford. He made no halt, but hastened on to Virginia.

Morgan, with his regular corps, halted at Sherrill's until the 30th of January, six days, and then moved down that evening, with Gen. Greene, who, with his staff, had reached him that day, to Beattie's Ford.

Cornwallis came through old Tryon Court House, now in Gaston, then down the Flint Hill road, crossing the South Fork at Gattis' Ford, just above the present Phifer's Factory, and reached Ramsour's Mill on Tuesday, the 23rd of January. Here, in order to lighten his march, he spent two days, the 24th and 25th, burning his wagons and heavy baggage—the step which proved fatal to him in the end. It rained the 27th and 28th, raising the Catawba. The river subsided on the 30th.

Morgan retreated the evening and all night of the 31st (Wednesday) towards Salisbury with his corps. Greene remained to bring off the militia and barely escaped capture.

ing shame be it said that until the day of Caruthers, that noble Christian and lofty patriot, no North Carolinian has taken time to expose the gross slander heaped upon those patriotic men.

It is not alleged that the riflemen of Winston and Armstrong of Surry, or the gallant Scotch-Irish of Guilford, who fought under Forbis, or the North Carolina Cavalry, under the Marquis of Bretigny, fled, or that a single officer of the militia even flinched from duty. For all these men words of encomium have been written and the chivalrous conduct of Davie has extorted from the jealousy of our traducers the highest meed of praise.

It is against the undisciplined and poorly armed militia, whom Lee said it was murder to pit against English veterans and British bayonets, that these anathemas have been hurled—hurled, too, to shield their own misfortunes and blunders. The author who has asserted it loudest and with unpardonable exaggeration has not been able to stand himself before the bar of history uncondemned for his own conduct in this battle.* This gross injustice has gone unchallenged, but in due time it shall be exposed and North Carolina shall be vindicated.

The retreat of General Greene ended when he crossed the Dan at Irving's Ferry the 15th of February, 1781, a whole day ahead of his pursuers.

Cornwallis was foiled, now, the third time and with disgust and disappointment he turned his face to Hillsboro; and concealed his chagrin by issuing high sounding proclamations recounting how he had conquered North Carolina and driven the last rebel from her borders. In one month from the date of this military gasconade he was burning bridges behind him in his flight to the sea, and his feet never rested until he crouched behind the breastworks at Wilmington.

*See Appendix.

General Greene rested his troops, and being joined by a thousand Virginia militia, re-crossed the Dan on the 23rd of February and formed a camp at Speedwell Iron Works on Troublesome Creek, fifteen miles Northwest of Guilford Court House.

Col. Otho Williams had already been detached with 1300 light troops to harass Cornwallis's camp; 700 of this gallant band were North Carolina militia from Rowan, Mecklenburg and Surry, who with about 30 Georgians under MacCall constituted the brigade of Pickens and which Johnson, in his history, calls Pickens' South Carolinians. The Palmetto State did not require such a misrepresentation to sustain her character. These men were the troops of Graham and Davidson and Locke, who were left without a leader by the bullet of Hager, the tory, who slew his neighbor to enslave his country and fled thenceforth like Cain, a wanderer through the earth. Pickens was then an exile in North Carolina, brave, chivalric, burning to avenge the oppressions and wrongs of his people but without men or arms to execute his purpose. In all the generosity of unselfish patriotism these North Carolinians elected General Pickens to take the place of that noble patriot whose name is perpetuated in the counties and colleges of his State. Pickens appreciated the honor and difficulty of filling the place of General William Davidson, the brave martyr of the Catawba, but he rose with the danger and won renown at the head of this famous command.

Cornwallis was so beset and goaded by the daring of this brigade that he sallied forth in his rage like a wounded bear to avenge himself upon his tormentors—tormentors whom his proclamation said had fled from the State.

The tory band of Pyles had been cut to pieces on the Alamance, and Tarleton had fled with courier after courier shouting in his ear the advance of Pickens and Lee and

Graham who were galloping over hill and valley to overtake him.

With bitter determination Cornwallis marched his army to the Alamance and made a dash at Wetzell's mills, for the North Carolina militia, under Butler and Eaton, who were marching to reinforce General Greene. This was the only spurt of energy or enterprise shown by Cornwallis in the whole campaign and it was foiled by the watchful eye of Otho Williams who reached the mill ten minutes in advance and drawing up his force on the opposite hill gave the enemy such a check that the enterprise ingloriously ended. The reinforcements reached Greene's camp on the evening of Saturday, the 10th of March. The North Carolina brigades numbered about five hundred each. Butler's Brigade from Granville and Orange, Eaton's from Bute, now Warren and Franklin, and Halifax; the Virginians under Generals Stevens and Lawson, both of whom were veterans, and who were now supernumerary Continental officers in command of militia, numbered about 1650 men—600 of these under General Stevens were veterans also.

The Sabbath was spent in rest. This was one of the Quaker habits Greene had not lost in his thirst for military glory.

Cornwallis lay then at New Garden with his whole army and was watching, with sullen inactivity, for the next movement of his wily and determined foe.

The English nobleman, enlightened by education, trained to the art of war under the ablest commanders and with four years experience in American warfare, had been taunted and baffled by a yeoman, the son of a blacksmith, whose youth was spent at the plow, and his Lordship felt the deep humiliation of his failure. Cornwallis was brave, but his antagonist never came within reach of his blow. He was insulted in his camp and

driven to desperation and rage but his foe, though visible at every outpost, was too wary for his snares. He wanted to fight—his provisions were low—he was in an enemy's country where every day increased his danger; but Greene had attained to that degree of military skill that he could not be forced to fight until he chose his ground and the time for the battle.

On Monday, the 13th of March, General Greene made every preparation for an advance and the morning of the 14th found him at Guilford Court House in eight miles of the enemy's camp.

Lee and Washington were called in, and the 14th was spent in reconnoitring the grounds and acquainting the army with every road around it. Ammunition was distributed and the men encouraged to do their duty.

Thursday, the 15th, Greene's army was rested and ready for battle.

Cornwallis was soon apprised of this advance of General Greene and knew it was a banter for battle. Indeed, it is said that General Greene caused a message to be communicated to his Lordship that he was ready to accommodate him if he was anxious to test his strength in battle.

Cornwallis immediately sent his baggage South, to Bell's mill, under the escort of Colonel Hamilton's regiment of loyalists and advanced to accept the American General's challenge.

The army of Cornwallis was small but every soldier in it was a disciplined veteran whose skill in arms had been ripened by long and arduous service.

Its commanders were brave men, devoted to the crown, who had won renown on the continent and had been selected for their fitness to make this last and desperate attempt to crush the South and destroy the Confederation of the States.

Cornwallis was 43 years old, his judgment was mature, his strength unimpaired and he was ambitious to a fault.

Unscrupulous in his conduct, cruel in his oppressions, he was an implacable and relentless foe. Disappointed in his pursuit of Morgan, he had burned his heavy baggage and destroyed every incumbrance to his march, at Ramsour's mill, and, stripped of almost every comfort, he had plunged forward after Greene with a blind fury which was foreign to his phlegmatic temperament; but neither fury nor courage nor privation availed against the watchful genius of his skilful antagonist. He was now compelled to fight in an enemy's country, where he declared he had "not been able to gain one loyal recruit." Without transportation and with a scant supply of ammunition, he determined, with an obstinacy characteristic of the man, to risk his reputation as a General and the lives and safety of his army in this last desperate struggle. His force hardly reached two thousand men, including the remnant of Tarleton's Legion which participated but little in the battle. He had Generals O'Hara, Howard and Leslie, all distinguished officers, and that Prince of soldiers, Lieutenant Colonel Webster of the 23rd, to execute his purposes. The 33rd had been the regiment of his Lordship and under his eye they were ready to dash at any foe. The 23rd, the Welsh Fusiliers, of which the Prince of Wales was by courtesy of his rank the Colonel, and commanded by Webster, constituted with the 33rd a brigade unexcelled by any corps in the world of equal number.

These were on his left, supported by the second battalion of the Queen's Guards under Lieutenant Colonel James Stuart—a gallant but unfortunate soldier.

On his right were the Seventy-first Scotch Highlanders, enthusiastic and dashing, with whom were the hireling mercenaries of the elector of Hesse Cassel, coarse and bru-

tal, without principle or sentiment, they were the irresponsible slaves of the tyrants who led them to battle and slaughter and received so much money per capita for all who were slain, thereby making profit out of carnage.

These were supported by Lieutenant-Colonel Norton, of the first battalion of British Guards.

The artillery under McLeod moved in the centre along the New Garden road, with Tarleton's Legion in their rear and the Grenadiers and Yagers on their flanks for support.

This was the order of battle formed by the British commander in the valley of Horsepen Creek, which is in sight, half a mile west of where we stand. It was at noon when their scarlet uniforms and burnished arms were glistening in the sunlight of that beautiful day. Not a furrow had been turned in the fields, not a bud was yet seen on the trees nor a flower in the valleys; but the first warm sunshine of spring was beginning to cast its rays upon the earth and enliven nature into activity again after a dreary winter of repose. It was not a day that suggested the conflict of arms or shedding of blood; but rather the lassitude of peace and the dreaminess of rest. But war, like death, "has all seasons for its own," and places its iron hand upon every scene of beauty and loveliness without consideration or remorse.

The last remnant of the Continental army in the South was now arrayed in front of the British commander and he fondly hoped that its rout or captivity would be succeeded by the fall of Virginia and the subjection of the States.

It was a supreme moment in the life of Cornwallis and the crisis of the revolution. This victory won, there was no foe to obstruct his passage into the defenceless province of Virginia; North Carolina would be at the mercy of the crown, and Georgia and South Carolina, already prostrate and subdued, could never rally for defence again.

Should Greene be beaten, Cornwallis could take up his triumphal march to the sea to be welcomed by the English fleets which rode unchallenged in the harbors of Norfolk and New York.

The prisoners of war at Charlottesville, Virginia, would be set free to plunder and pillage their captors. France, capricious and fickle, would forsake the waning fortune of the colonies, and making peace for herself, leave her allies to their fate. Washington would be crushed by the army of Clinton in his front and that of Cornwallis in his rear, or be driven into the frozen regions of the North for refuge. Congress would be scattered from its halls and carry dismay wherever they fled for safety.

These were the precious hopes and dazzling visions that stimulated the ambition and nerved the hand of Cornwallis for the battle now before him. The greater the odds against him, the greater would be the glory of his triumph and the more important its results.

Not only hope and glory allured him to battle but retaliation and revenge rankled in his breast and drove him to desperate deeds. His Lieutenants, Ferguson and Tarleton, had been defeated and humbled by the militia of North Carolina whom they despised, and British pride demanded that the insult be avenged.

Every officer and soldier remembered King's Mountain and Cowpens and were eager to wipe out the disgrace of those disastrous fields.

Nothing but news of misfortune had gone to Clinton from the army of invasion since the frosts of October, 1780, had chilled their zeal, and the great rival of Cornwallis was secretly gloating over the misfortunes of his personal and political enemy.

The recovery of prestige and the restoration of royal confidence added a powerful incentive to the achievement of victory.

Cornwallis resolved, therefore, that "he would conquer or die" on this field, and the reckless exposure of his person during the battle indicated the determination with which he entered the conflict.

None the less was the appreciation of the American army and its officers of the decisive crisis which was now upon them.

General Greene, the confidential friend and trusted counselor of Washington, had been selected by him as the Commander in Chief of the Southern Department of the American army. Their friendship had begun at Boston with the first enthusiastic outburst of the revolution and had steadfastly matured in the camp and the council.

"The order of the Commander in Chief, which assigned General Nathanael Greene to the command of the Southern Department, bears date the 14th of October, 1780. Until that period, his standing in the army was of the first order in respectability; he enjoyed the confidence of Washington and of the country, and had ever discharged the duties of the man and the soldier with fidelity and ability. But no opportunities had yet been afforded him of displaying those eminent talents which then broke upon the American people, and exhibited a splendour of military character excelled only by him whom none can equal.

"He was at that time in the thirty-ninth year of his age. His stature about five feet, ten or eleven inches; his frame vigorous and well proportioned; his port erect and commanding; nor was his martial appearance diminished by a slight obstruction in the motion of his right leg, contracted in early life. The general character of his face was that of manly beauty. His fair and florid complexion had not entirely yielded to the exposure of five campaigns; nor was a slight blemish in the right eye observed, but to excite regret that it did not equal the benevolent expression and brilliancy of the left. Such is the portrait of General Greene."—*Johnson, Vol. 2, p. 1.*

Washington, himself in need of reinforcements, had reduced his own army to the last degree of weakness to

strengthen Gates, and had nothing to give the South but a skillful General and a pure patriot, whose personal influence and military reputation might arouse the martial spirit of his department and enable him to create an army for defence. He came clothed with power almost dictatorial, and with an undaunted spirit entered on the work of his mission. He found a few soldiers at Charlotte, naked and hungry. He led a portion of them to the fertile fields of the Yadkin where he rested them in comfortable cabins in the forest.

By entreaty and seizure he obtained for them a scant supply of clothing and an abundance of food.

Their desponding spirits were revived; their physical strength was regained and once more they felt like soldiers struggling for freedom. Greene mingled daily with his men, encouraging and instructing them, bringing them together for acquaintance, that mutual confidence might be established.

Discipline and drill were rigidly enforced, guns repaired, ammunition gathered and every preparation, that the resources of the country afforded, was made for the campaign which he expected to open in the early spring.

These were the men who were suddenly summoned in the very depths of winter to leave their camps and cabins to protect the retreat of Morgan, who was flying before the whole British army.

They were veteran soldiers, though their numbers did not exceed 750 men. They had heard of the splendid victory of their comrades at Cowpens and were impatient to emulate them in deeds of glory. To the victors of the Cowpens, and soldiers of the camp, was added the second Maryland regiment, a new levy of regulars, who were as yet untrained and inexperienced, and the regiment of Colonel Green of Virginia of the same class of troops. These constituted the Continental line, 1490 strong.

To these were added about 80 cavalry and 80 infantry of Lee's Legion—a corps of picked men from the veterans of the Northern army, of whom about 20 were Virginians, including their Lieutenant Colonel.

Colonel Washington's cavalry numbered about 90 men, recruited here and there in the Carolinas. To these were added a fine company of cavalry from North Carolina, which was led by the Marquis of Bretigny, a French nobleman, who had trained them to arms. They numbered 40 select men and were an honor to North Carolina and the Captain who led them.

There was still another class of soldiers who came to participate in this battle for liberty, the Volunteer Militia, as distinguished from the general levy. Men who were not compelled nor hired to fight. They were patriots from honor and principle, generally of the intelligent and religious classes who came voluntarily to offer their lives and fortunes, if need be, as sacrifices to their country. They had calculated the danger and taken the risk and in their zeal and courage and noble impulses were a formidable and dangerous enemy.

The State was without muskets or ammunition; but each of these volunteers shouldered his hunting rifle and went to the field of battle. Generally they elected their own leaders who fought with the rifle as did the soldier by his side. It was the Volunteer Militia who alone fought the battle of Kings Mountain and won the battle Cowpens. They were all experienced in Indian warfare and accustomed to the hardships of the camp. All of them shot the rifle with unerring aim and steady hand. Their courage was unflinching and their hearts were devoted to liberty. They came from the mountains and foothills of Virginia and North Carolina.

Greene had been promised by Colonel William Campbell, of Virginia, that he would bring to his assistance

one thousand of these hardy "over-mountain men" and that the heroes of Kings Mountain should accompany him.

Cornwallis had declared that he would hang Campbell in retaliation for the execution of the Tories at Gilbert-town, if he ever captured him, and Campbell had notified Cornwallis that his riflemen would shoot his Lordship as lawful game, wherever they found him. The two horses shot under the British commander showed how nearly they fulfilled the threat.

But Colonel Campbell was doomed to disappointment in raising the force he contemplated. Cornwallis, apprehending the danger from the riflemen of the mountains, had early after his arrival in the up country sent emissaries among the Cherokees with presents and falsehoods to stir them up to invade and plunder and desolate the frontiers. This same Cornwallis, whom Colonel Lee, in his exuberance of generosity, has called the "amiable Cornwallis," was as destitute of humanity or mercy as the savage whom he incited by deception and fraud to these deeds of cruelty. He was never "amiable" until the blood of his own men was made to atone for their cruel deeds by the victors at Kings Mountain.

In February, 1781, the Cherokees invaded the frontiers of North Carolina and Virginia, and the over-mountain men under Shelby, Sevier and Colonel Arthur Campbell [the brother-in-law of Colonel William Campbell] had embodied all their forces to repel them.

Their hands were full, resisting the tomahawk and scalping knife and torch which the "amiable Cornwallis" had placed in the hands of the savage for their destruction. Colonel William Campbell, in the bitterness of disappointment, had to report to General Greene on the 7th of March, with only 60 followers, but "one blast from his bugle horn were worth a thousand men." The author of

the "Rear Guard of the Revolution," an avowed and unprincipled enemy of North Carolina, may perhaps be quoted as a witness when he permits his enmity and malignity to speak a word of truth for the State.

He states that General Greene had written Sevier reminding him of his glorious deeds at Kings Mountain and earnestly urging him to come to his aid with all the mountaineers he could muster. These appeals fell on willing ears but Sevier's hands were tied—his men had now again to fight for their own homes and firesides.

"However, he despatched a small force under Charles Robertson to General Greene and they soon after gave a good account of themselves at Guilford." These men were from Sullivan county, North Carolina, which county Sevier often represented in the Legislature of this State.

Ramsey, in his *Annals of Tennessee*, page 251, also says that in response to Greene's earnest entreaties "a few of the pioneers of Tennessee were under his (Greene's command) at the hardly contested battle of Guilford Court House." I beg that this fact be noted because no official report of General Greene, or his Adjutant General, professes to give an account of the volunteer forces in the action and we can only get credit for what is due North Carolina by these little incidents of history casually mentioned by authors who received it from the soldiers of that day, or from tradition in their families.

Here then was undoubtedly a small body of as good soldiers and hardy riflemen as "ever drew a bead on a red-coat"—perhaps one hundred strong, all North Carolinians.

Would it be invidious to suggest, as Colonel William Campbell lived in the county of Virginia contiguous to Sullivan and Washington, North Carolina, that for the time these men placed themselves under his command, while his own fellow-citizens were absent fighting the

Indians, and that these constituted the mountain-men with whom Campbell reported to Greene.

This swapping of men on the border was an every day occurrence where but little attention was paid to general laws defining military boundaries. The population was sparse, inter-married with each other, far from the central government and were a "law unto themselves," in both a military and civil capacity.

At any rate, here were North Carolina riflemen in the battle for whom no historian has given us credit. Let us estimate them at 100 men. Johnson's *Life of Greene*, the author of which was unkindly disposed to North Carolina, relates that on the day of Pyle's defeat, the 26th day of February, 1781, "two small detachments of about 100 men each, under Majors Winston and Armstrong" joined the command of Pickens. This you will note was only 18 days before the battle and we learn from Colonel Lenoir's narrative, in his application for a pension, under the act of 1832, that this force, with which he was connected were with Pickens up to the 7th of March, when he joined Greene, and that Lenoir being clerk of the Court, at that time, of Wilkes county, and the week for court having arrived, he obtained leave of absence for six weeks, leaving his comrades with Greene. They were to serve, therefore, for six weeks longer which placed them in service far beyond the battle. If confirmatory testimony were necessary we have the direct testimony of Lyman C. Draper, who gives the biography of Major Winston in his just and admirable book entitled "Kings Mountain and its Heroes." He states positively that Winston was present and "shared with Greene the fortunes of Guilford Court House."

It is not only true that these riflemen of Surry were present but they were the very last to leave the field after Tarleton's final charge which dispersed the Ameri-

can forces on the left; for in that charge Tolliafferro "of Surry was killed" and Jesse Franklin, afterwards Governor of North Carolina and United States Senator from this State, made a very narrow escape. The narrative of these occurrences is given by Caruthers, in his sketches of North Carolina, Second Series, upon the authority of the present Judge Jesse Franklin Graves, a grandson of Governor Franklin, than whom no better man or purer Judge now adorns the bench of the old North State.

Here now were two hundred more Volunteer riflemen from North Carolina who did not figure on the military rolls of Greene's Adjutant General.

Major Joseph Winston was the Major of the militia of Surry county as we learn from his title and rank at Kings Mountain; exactly how his comrade in arms, Major Armstrong, obtained his title or what was his christian name we cannot ascertain now with certainty, as there were two of the Armstrongs from Surry who bore themselves gallantly in the revolutionary war. Most probably it was John Armstrong who was afterwards distinguished in the Legislature from 1782 to 1784.

No officer had been more distinguished for courage and fortitude at Kings Mountain than Major Winston. He led the van of attack on the right and by his heroic daring conducted his men straight forward to the British camp without faltering or temporary retreat.*

He was an educated gentlemen, of patriotic impulses, early devoted to the cause of liberty and a soldier of uncommon merit. He survived to represent his county in the State Senate and his district in the Congress of the United States. One of the wealthiest and most attractive cities of the State bears his name.

Another patriot band from Guilford county is to be

* Ramsey's Tennessee, p. 235-6.

added to the riflemen of Surry and the over-mountain men of Sullivan.

When the junction of Morgan's and Greene's forces took place at Guilford Court House on the 10th day of February, 1781, they found there 200 men from Guilford county, armed with rifles, under the command of Colonel James Martin, at that time Colonel of the militia.

In the council of war held here General Greene reluctantly submitted to the majority of his officers, who opposed giving Cornwallis battle, and the conclusion of the majority, to retreat over the Dan, was adopted. The Guilford militia under Martin were not compelled to leave the State but about 100 of them volunteered to follow the fortunes of Greene's army wherever it led them and to remain till the British were driven from the State. Thenceforth they belonged to the patriot band of volunteers. Nearly all of these men were Scotch-Irish Presbyterians, belonging to the churches of Alamance and Buffalo of which Rev. David Caldwell, D. D., was pastor. They were of the better class of citizens, who were intelligent enough to understand the principles which were involved in the struggle for liberty, and men of property sufficient to give them interest in the result. They had inherited from their church and ancestry the principles of civil liberty and the courage to maintain those principles.

They were no hireling mercenaries nor substitutes, no drafted militia, but manly patriots who came to contend for liberty or to shed their blood, if need be, in its defence.

They had been Whigs from the beginning of the struggle, and following the doctrines inculcated by their distinguished pastor had steadfastly adhered to the cause of independence.

Most of them had been sympathizers with the "Regulators" in the inception of that movement when its

objects were lawful and just, but had not adhered to their fortunes when they ran into excess and licentiousness under the leadership of Herman Husbands and others. They were willing to resist the payment of extortionate fees to sheriffs and clerks, but they would not endorse the dishonest resolutions that no taxes nor debts should be paid.

When the legitimate struggle for liberty came they were still Whigs and rebels; but found many of those who had gone to excess as regulators, fighting them, on the British side, as tories; mostly those who had been pardoned by the Crown and seduced by blandishments and office to forsake the principles they had avowed.

These one hundred Guilford county men, Volunteer soldiers, had been marching and countermarching with General Greene, and when the 15th day of March came it found them in line of battle, as a separate organization under the command of Arthur Forbis, a ruling elder of the Alamance Presbyterian church.

He had been elected Captain by the men of Alamance, the Wileys, Paisleys, Gillespies, Montgomerys and others, whose names I do not know, but on the eventful day of the battle here, Colonel James Martin was assigned to other duty and the captaincy of this "Centurions Band" devolved upon Forbis. He yielded up his life for the cause and from that day forth, as Colonel James T. Morehead has so happily described it, "He was brevetted as Colonel by the unanimous voice of his fellow-citizens," and has gone into the annals of history as Colonel Arthur Forbis of Guilford.

These men fought under the eye of Lieut-Colonel Lee, and he has so far relaxed his prejudices as to say that they refused to fly before the British bayonet and adhered to the command of Campbell throughout the bloody conflict on the left.

So that of the Volunteer soldiers, who fought so gallantly here on this day, we have:

Winston's Command.....	100 men.
Armstrong's Command.....	100 men.
Sevier's Men, under Robertson	100 men.
The Men of Guilford	100 men.
North Carolina Cavalry	40 men.
Total	440 men.

For whom North Carolina has heretofore received no credit, owing to the fact that they were not regular soldiers and did not appear on the muster rolls of the army.

There was still another indefinite number of North Carolinians, volunteers, who fought under Greene that day. About the 10th of March, General Greene detached Pickens and his Brigade of North Carolinians to the Yadkin to collect a force in the rear of Cornwallis. Their time had expired, but a number of these men, perceiving that a pitched battle was imminent, determined to remain and share the fortunes of the American Commander.

Among this number was Abram Forney, of Lincoln, a prominent citizen of that county, whose testimony to an incident of this battle I shall hereafter use, and Caruthers names a dozen citizens of Guilford and the surrounding counties who shouldered their rifles and marched to the Court House when they heard that General Greene had advanced to that point. When asked, "Where are you going?" the response was, "To the big Shooting Match," and if space were allowed for humor I could relate how well and how often they "drove the centre" on that day.

We may safely and justly assert that North Carolina had at least 500 Volunteer Riflemen in this field of battle. Hereafter we shall show their positions and their conduct.

Virginia had her volunteer soldiers too. Colonel William Campbell, he of Kings Mountain, towered above

them all. He had but few personal followers, but his position, experience and skill entitled him to the command. He had 60 men when he united with Pickens on the same day that Winston and Armstrong did. Colonel Lynch, with his riflemen two hundred strong, came also, and Captain Thomas Watkins, with a company of cavalry, one of whom was the giant, Peter Francisco, so well known in Virginia history—in all perhaps 40 men*—the whole aggregating about 600 volunteers.

These were divided, as we shall see, on the right and left flanks.

Colonel Lee refused to allow Captain Watkins to join his Legion because they were not well enough dressed; but Washington, who was the old "Rough and Ready" of his day, gladly gave them welcome and they fought like Turks under his command.

The militia was the third class of troops in Greene's army. The North Carolina militia, composed, as we have incidentally stated, of two brigades. The old honest regulator, General John Butler, of Orange, who had spent his life fighting against British oppression, commanded one Brigade of 500 men, and General Eaton, of Halifax, commanded the other—the whole about 1,000 men.

The Virginia militia were commanded by Generals Stevens and Lawson, both of whom had been regular soldiers. In Stevens' command were about 600 veterans who had seen three years service under Washington and many of whom were now hired substitutes for drafted Virginians. These two brigades have been variously estimated at from 1,200 to 1,900 men—perhaps the middle is the safe ground, about 1,650 men.

The artillery force consisted of sixty men and four six pounder brass pieces of cannon. They were under the command of Major Singleton.

* Foote's Sketches of Virginia, First Series, p. 403.

After a careful and patient research among the various authors who have described the battle I believe the above to be a true statement of the number and class of troops under General Greene's command on that day, the whole number being about five thousand one hundred and forty [5,140] men of all arms. Cornwallis estimated the Americans at 7,000, but this is an exaggeration. Colonel Lee says about 4,000, but the truth, as usual, lies in the middle.

There was one North Carolinian more, whose name deserves the encomium bestowed upon it.

Colonel William Richardson Davie was at this time General Greene's Commissary-General. He was then but twenty-five years old and yet his brilliant and dashing career had given him renown as a soldier. He was a young lawyer at Salisbury when the tocsin of war was sounded. His fortune was not large but he spent it all to equip a company of cavalry which he led against the enemy. He was the most successful partisan leader of his State and had struck terror into the British outposts and exhibited a daring at Charlotte, in facing the army of Cornwallis, that made him the center of attraction in the whole army. General Greene discovering his genius and power offered him the position of Commissary-General, which at first he repelled with some impatience; but when the like promise was made to him that was made to Greene at the time he was appointed Quarter-Master-General of the army of Washington, that he might participate freely in the fighting, he yielded reluctantly to the earnest request of General Greene to accept the office. He was in closer confidential relations with General Greene than any officer of his army and this confidence continued to the end without abatement or cause for complaint. One who often fought by his side says:

“Davie was not only distinguished as an intelligent but an in-

“trepid soldier. His delight was to lead a charge; and possessing great bodily strength, united with uncommon activity, is said to have overcome more men in personal conflict than any individual in the service.”*

Another author (Moore) thus describes him:

“He was then fresh from his law books and but twenty-five years of age. Tall, graceful and strikingly handsome, he had those graces of person which would have made him the favorite in the clanging lists of feudal days. To this he added elegant culture, thrilling eloquence and a graciousness of manner which was to charm in after days the gilded *salons* of Paris. His dauntless valor was supervised by a sleepless outlook against surprise.”

By his intrepid daring and fearless exposure of his person on every hand he encouraged the soldiers to firmness and fortitude, and set them an example which incited them to the discharge of duty.

He lived to represent North Carolina in Congress, to become her Governor, to found her University and to represent the Nation at the splendid Court of Versailles.

The order in which General Greene fought his troops was, as much as possible, an imitation of the arrangement of General Morgan at the Cowpens. It had proven eminently successful in that instance, though fought against a foe superior in numbers, in discipline and arms and it was but natural that General Greene should repeat the experiment when fighting the same foe under much more favorable circumstances. General Greene had no experience in the mode of Southern warfare and having great confidence in Morgan who had been brought up from boyhood to fight the Indians on the frontier, it was not strange that he should defer greatly to his counsel and advice. Morgan had been stricken down with rheumatism on the retreat from Cowpens and was

*Garden's Anecdotes of the Revolution.

compelled to seek rest and medical aid, but his affection for Greene and his ardent patriotism induced him to write to his commander, on the 20th of February, nearly a month before the battle, and suggest to him how he should fight Cornwallis: "Put the militia in the centre" said he, with some picked troops in their rear with orders to shoot down the first man that runs, select the riflemen and fight them on the flanks under enterprising officers who are acquainted with this kind of fighting."

Greene knew that Washington had disapproved this arrangement of troops. That he did not think that undisciplined or inexperienced militia, without bayonets, who had never been in battle, nor subject to the demoralizing influence of a cannonade on raw troops, should be placed in front to receive the first and fiercest onset of regulars and veterans who had been converted into military machines by long discipline and arduous service. Washington's plan was to place his best troops in front and use the militia as a reserve.

General Greene has also been criticised for placing his lines too far apart, so as not to be in supporting distance of each other. It was argued, therefore, that Cornwallis was not compelled to fight but one line at any one time and that he was superior to any one of the single lines. But it is reasonable and customary in all the affairs of human life, whether civil or military, to imitate that which has proven successful under like circumstances before. We should not therefore be ready to condemn General Greene for following the example and advice of General Morgan because his victory was not so complete as Morgan's. Perhaps if Morgan had fought Cornwallis instead of Tarleton the result of Cowpens would not have been so decisive and glorious to the American arms; and it must also be carefully considered that the militia under Morgan were all volunteers who

had been in many battles on the frontiers and were but recently flushed with their magnificent victory at Kings Mountain. General Morgan too "was at that time the ablest commander of light troops in the world."*

General Greene, as we have heretofore stated, had selected this battle field on the 11th of February, on his retreat, and he had now been here a whole day and surveyed the ground and roads in the vicinity anew and was familiar with every avenue of approach and escape. He had taken his field officers over the grounds and thoroughly instructed them in the parts they were to act in the approaching conflict.

The strongest reasons for the selection of this spot were:

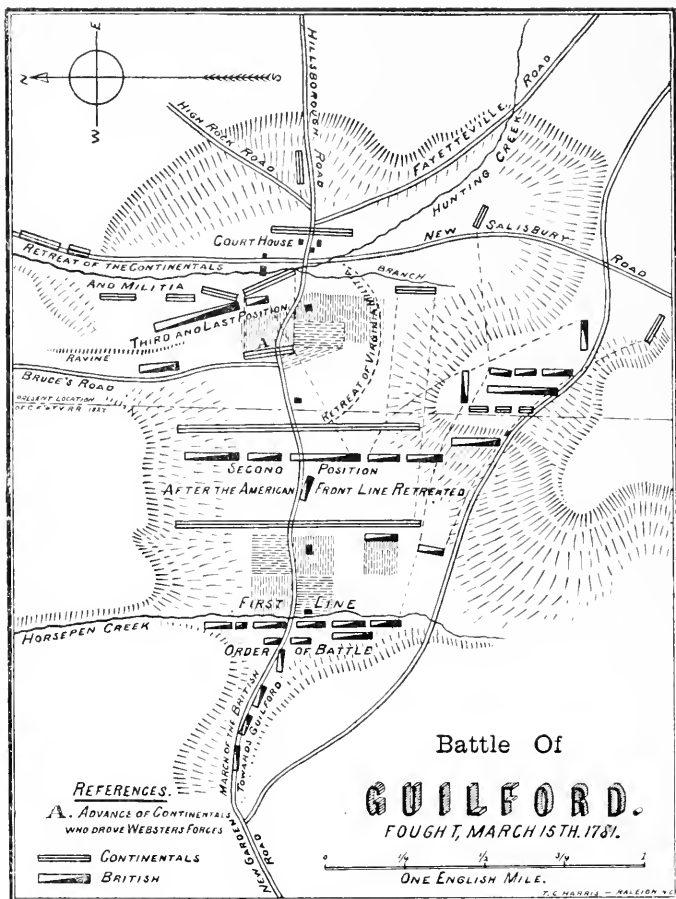
First. That the highways diverging from Guilford Court House afforded three lines of retreat in case of disaster, so that his army could not be totally routed or destroyed as was that of Gates at Camden.

If the American left were turned, as it was, the retreat was open by the road going North to McQuistian's bridge; if the right flank were turned, the High Rock Road, running Northeast was an avenue of escape, or in the last resort the road going directly east to Hillsboro might be utilized.

The second reason was that there was space enough, and strong positions in the forest, where the militia could fight to advantage behind fences and trees as was their custom, and be able to protect themselves from the charge of cavalry. Nothing in the warfare of that day was so terrible to the minds of militia as exposure to cavalry, and especially when commanded by so brutal a butcher as Tarleton.

With these considerations and hopes, General Greene formed his army, early in the morning of the 15th of March, into three lines of battle which I shall now endeavor to describe and point out to you as intelligently as possible.

* Bancroft, Vol. 5, p. 480.



Battle Of GUILFORD. FOUGHT, MARCH 15TH. 1781.

To our right and west of where we stand, about 280 yards, behind a rail fence, in the skirt of the wood, facing the field in front, which had been in corn the year before, were placed the North Carolina militia, about 1000 strong; the left flank of General Eaton's brigade resting on the New Garden or Old Salisbury road, which is just to the rear of our stand, and the right flank of General John Butler's brigade resting on the same road and to the left and South of Eaton's brigade. The old broom sedge field which we see now, where Eaton stood, was in forest at that day. On the right flank of Eaton's brigade were placed Colonel William Washington's cavalry, the North Carolina Cavalry under the Marquis of Bretigny, Capt. Watkin's cavalry, Kirkwood's Delawares and a portion of Lynch's riflemen.

On the left of Butler's brigade was Capt. Arthur Forbis with his Guilford county Volunteers, about 100 strong, and Colonel William Campbell's command consisting of Preston's volunteers from Virginia, Winston's and Armstrong's Volunteer riflemen from Surry county, North Carolina, Robertson's 100 men from Sullivan county, North Carolina, Colonel Campbell's 60 men and Lee's Legion. This Legion was recruited as picked men from the whole Northern army, and now numbered about one hundred and sixty men, about equally divided as cavalry and infantry.

Both these flanking, or covering parties, were in a line oblique to the militia, so as to give a raking fire upon the British flanks as they approached. Campbell's line was nearly perpendicular to the North Carolina militia on the left and was also behind a fence skirting the wood.

In the New Garden road, between Eaton's left and Butler's right, were placed two six pounder brass pieces under the command of Major Singleton.

The second line was parallel to the first, very nearly

three hundred yards to the east of it, and just about where this stand is now located.

General Lawson's brigade was on the north side of the New Garden road, with its left resting upon it. General Stevens' brigade was on the south side, with its right resting on the road.

In the rear of this second line, by the advice of Morgan, General Stevens had placed a row of riflemen, called sentinels, with orders to shoot down the first Virginia militiaman who deserted his post. This weakened the force of riflemen in front, who were to fight the enemy, and transformed them into an enemy's line in the rear. The orders to fire on every recreant soldier were very positive. General Stevens had witnessed the shameful stampede of his men, "without firing a shot," at Camden in the August before, and had determined to arrest another such disgrace here. To this sanguinary order is perhaps attributable the slightly greater loss in the battle of the Virginia, over the North Carolina militia. How many of the Virginians were shot down by these sentinels is not reported. The order, however, must have been rigidly enforced on Stevens' side of the road, for his command fought longer and better than Lawson's.

The third line of battle was formed about 350 yards to our left, and east of us in the old field to the north of the New Garden road. It was composed of four regiments, the left, or Second Maryland regiment, commanded by Colonel Ford, resting on the New Garden road near where it crosses the rivulet. On its right, in a line oblique to the highway, and following the slope of the hill, was the First Maryland under Colonel Gunby. These two regiments formed the Maryland Brigade under the command of Colonel Otho Williams. On the right of the First Maryland was Colonel Hawes' regiment of Virginians. To its right was Colonel Green's regiment of Virginians, the

two forming a brigade under General Huger, of South Carolina. On the right of the First Maryland and between it and the left of Hawes' regiment, at the point of the line, were two more brass six pounders under Lieut. Finley.

In the early morning Colonel Lee, with his Legion and a detachment under Campbell, had been sent forward, west, on the New Garden road, to feel the enemy and give notice of his advance. A very sharp engagement soon followed between Lee and Tarleton, at New Garden meeting house, in which Lee was unhorsed, but it was not long before Lee was compelled to retreat before the advance of the whole English army. He advised Greene of the advance of Cornwallis, and then took his place in the wood near to and in the rear of the line of Volunteers under Forbis.

General Greene was at this time at the front line and there received the news of the coming battle.

He again imitated the example of General Morgan at Cowpens by riding along his front line of militia and exhorting it to a firm discharge of duty.

The scene is thus depicted by George Washington Greene in his Biography of his Grandfather, vol. 3, p. 196:

“When these arrangements were completed General Greene passed along the first line. The day was hot, and holding his hat in one hand, he was wiping the perspiration from his ample forehead with the other. His voice was clear and firm as he called his men’s attention to the strength of their position and, *like Morgan at the Cowpens, asked only three rounds. “Three rounds, my boys, and then you may fall back.”* “Then taking his position with the Continentals he held himself in readiness to go wherever his duty might call him.”

The only error in this statement is in the number of rounds required of the militia before they were to fall back.

All historians agree that Morgan only required *two rounds* instead of three. Garden, who was one of Lee's Legion and heard the speech says:

"The North Carolina militia were assured by General Greene that if they would only preserve their station long enough to give their enemy *two fires* they should obtain his free permission to *retire from the field*.—Garden's Anecdotes, p. 40."

Gordon's History, Vol. 4, page 55, has also this language:

"General Stevens had the address to prevent his brigade from receiving any bad impression from the retreating North Carolinians by giving out *that they had orders to retire* after discharging their pieces. To cherish this idea he ordered his men to open their files to favor their passage."

It is evident that General Stevens and his whole command were apprised of the order to the North Carolina militia (as they should have been,) to prevent surprise and panic in their ranks by the retreat of the North Carolinians in their front. Gordon affects to believe this was a ruse of General Stevens but in this he is manifestly in error. The order was given just as General Stevens communicated it to his command.

Rev. E. W. Caruthers, D. D., who wrote the life of Rev. Dr. David Caldwell in 1842, had been over the battle field of Guilford Court House very often in company with the soldiers who participated in the battle and had conversed with many old people of the neighborhood who knew its history from their cotemporaries and was therefore familiar with the incidents and traditions of the battle. Robert Rankin, a member of the Buffalo church, often pointed out the different localities of the field, especially on the left where Rankin fought under Colonel Campbell among the North Carolina riflemen. With this familiar knowledge of events, Dr. Caruthers assumes in his Life

of Caldwell, as an established fact, known by everybody, that the militia were ordered to fire twice and then retreat. Speaking of Capt. Forbis' command, page 236, he says:

" They stood firm until they had fired twice, according to orders."

Again he says:

" They were placed in the front rank, stood firm and fired the number of times proscribed in the general order. Forbis himself fired the first gun in that division, and killed his man "

There are several incidental allusions to this " order " to fire twice and always as one of the unquestionable facts connected with the battle.

It is not, however, emphasised because the Doctor was writing the biography of a minister of the Gospel and not a defence of the North Carolina militia and the order was only a collateral fact in the narrative.

Subsequently, in 1856, Dr. Caruthers, in his Sketches—Second Series—vindicated the North Carolina militia from the charge of inefficiency in the battle.

G. W. Greene says it was communicated to him as a tradition. It was indeed a fact well known and often spoken of by old persons to succeeding generations, and it is incomprehensible that a fact so well known and understood should have been omitted, in his Memoirs, by Colonel Lee who must have heard it, for he was on the front line when the order was given. It is inexplicable that Johnson too, who had access to General Greene's correspondence and papers should have suppressed it, while he gives great prominence to the like order of General Morgan at Cowpens.

I have in my possession also an interesting letter from Captain James F. Johnson, of Charlotte, N. C., giving me the statement of Abram Forney, of Lincoln county,

who remained for the battle after Pickens' brigade had gone. Forney states distinctly that it was "two rounds" and adds that his portion of the line obeyed the order fully.

There can be nothing settled by testimony more certainly than the fact that the North Carolina militia were, by the *personal order* of General Greene, directly instructed to *fire twice* and assured that he required no more of them. And it is the failure to observe and state this all important fact that has placed these troops in a false light before their posterity. When we reflect for a moment, this order is so reasonable and natural that we cannot doubt the truth of the assertion that it was given. We may suppose that Morgan's order was further imitated by advising that the fires be given "at fifty yards."

The North Carolinians were armed with their hunting rifles. They carried their powder in a powder horn with a charger attached. Their bullets and patching were in a pouch to their left side and the tallow to grease the patching under a spring in the stock of the rifle. To load a rifle required that the powder be measured in the charger and poured carefully into the small muzzle bore of the rifle. The patching was to be greased and placed over the muzzle and the ball placed upon it and pressed into the gun. A knife was then used to cut off the surplus patching. The ball was to be rammed down the gun with a ramrod which was then to be replaced in the thimbles along the barrel. The last operation was to prime the pan in the flint and steel lock before the rifleman was ready to fire upon his enemy. The operation required at least two or three minutes to perform it.

If the British line were fired upon at fifty yards they could be over the intervening ground in less than fifty seconds, or if at one hundred yards in one and a half

minutes. So that unless the British line was repulsed in its advance by the deadliness of the fire they would be upon the militia before it was possible to load three times, or if the operation of loading were delayed, by trepidation, before they could fire twice.

It is evident that General Greene, as well as every reasonable person, expected that the militia would give way whenever the bayonet did reach them; for against it they had no arm of defence nor discipline to beat it back. Johnson well remarks in speaking of the terror of the bayonet that "nothing but the absolute subjection of every human feeling to the restraints of discipline can dissipate the real or imagined terrors of such a conflict" and Lee has said that "to expose militia to such a charge, without discipline or arms to repel it, is murder." Therefore, General Greene instructed them, so they could understand it, to fire until the bayonet did reach them, which he calculated would be two rounds, and then to retire. To require more of them, as Lee says, in discussing this mode of warfare, "would be murder." It would be to expect more of them than of the conquerors of Ferguson at King's mountain.

The sequel will show that the North Carolinians disobeyed no order in retreating before the bayonet, and that they performed the whole duty required of them that day, and if the day had gone as did Cowpens, the order of Greene to the militia would, most probably, not have been suppressed.

General Greene, having now retired to the Continental line, exhorted the second Maryland, which was a fresh regiment, though regulars, to firmness and courage. He was no more on the front line and as to its conduct he could only afterwards speak from hearsay.

It was not long until the fire from Singleton's guns upon the British column, as it came in view, across Horse-pen

Creek, about half mile west of the line, announced the presence of the British Army.

It made a rapid descent to the valley of the creek under cover of its artillery, which replied to Singleton's, and there "displayed" their line, to use the technical word of that period. Webster on the left and North and Leslie on the right and South of the road. Webster fronting Eaton's brigade and Leslie fronting Butler's. The artillery in the road—the cavalry in the rear.

The second battalion of British Guards under General O'Hara being in reserve to Webster and the first battalion under Lieutenant-Colonel Norton in reserve to Leslie.

The battle began first on the North of the road, where Eaton's brigade was posted, the ground in their front, as you will perceive, is comparatively level and as the British line came in fair, unobstructed view, first in that part of the field they received the first fire at perhaps 100 yards distance, the militia being impatient to fire and to have time to reload their rifles before the English could push upon them with the bayonet.

Colonel Tarleton, who was in the road, in the rear of Webster's brigade, and in full view of its advance against Eaton's brigade, thus describes the scene transpiring before his eyes:

"The *order and coolness* of that part of Webster's brigade which advanced across the open ground *exposed to the enemy's fire cannot be sufficiently extolled*. The extremities were not less gallant, but were more protected by the woods in which they moved. The militia allowed the front line to approach within 150 yards before they gave their fire."

Stedman, the English historian, who was the Commissary General of Cornwallis and was also a spectator of the scene, repeats this account of Webster's advance and vouches for Tarleton's general description of the battle.

Colonel Lee, who knew Stedman's character well and the incidents of the whole campaign, in correcting an unintentional error into which Stedman had fallen about the defeat of Pyles, says: "I have acknowledged my conviction of Stedman's impartiality and respect for truth." Therefore this account of Tarleton's comes endorsed by Stedman, and Stedman's character is endorsed by Lee.

This is a prominent and important fact, because if "the order and coolness of" Webster's brigade under the fire of the North Carolina militia cannot be "sufficiently extolled," the fire must have been very deadly and continuous.

Tarleton and Stedman would not acknowledge the insufficiency of the English language to describe this charge unless it was made in the face of a galling and destructive fire. The tribute to the "coolness and courage" of Webster's brigade involves the highest tribute to the firmness of the North Carolina brigade.

Another English historian, Lamb, who was at that time an officer of the Thirty-third regiment and participated in this charge, has also quoted Tarleton's language with approbation, and in order to give further and greater emphasis to the coolness and courage of Webster's brigade, he says:

"As the author belonged to Colonel Webster's brigade, he is enabled (and the reader will naturally expect it of him) to state some circumstances unnoticed by any historian, from his own personal observation. After the brigade formed across the open ground, Col. Webster rode on to the front and gave the word, 'Charge.' Instantly the movement was made in excellent order at a sharp run, with arms charged; when arrived *within forty yards* of the enemy's line it was perceived that their whole force had their arms presented and resting on a rail fence, the common partition in America. *They were taking aim with the nicest precision,*

"Twixt host and host but narrow space was left
A dreadful interval, and front to front,
Presented, stood in terrible array."

“ At this awful period a *general pause* took place; both parties surveyed each other a moment with most anxious suspense. Colonel Webster then rode forward in front of the Twenty-third regiment and said, with more than his usual commanding voice, which was well known to his brigade, “Come on, my brave Fusiliers!” This operated like an inspiring voice. They rushed forward amidst *the enemy's fire—dreadful was the havoc* on both sides.”

“ Amazing scene !

What showers of mortal hail, what flaky fires !”

“ At last the Americans gave way and the brigade advanced to the attack of the second line.” *

Lamb wrote his work in 1809, after seeing other accounts of this battle and felt constrained to give his personal recollections of this particular part of the engagement, because he was an active participant in it and no other historian had described the action in detail in that part of the field. This author is one of the highest respectability and is frequently quoted by American historians. In Carrington's “Battles of the American Revolution,” a standard work of recent date, copious quotations are made from Lamb. He is also quoted by George Washington Greene in his biography of the General. Lamb's work was published by subscription and among the list of subscribers are most of the noblemen and literatti of his day. Lamb was a teacher in a High school in Scotland and a man of letters as well as a soldier.

Can any one doubt the truth of such a statement coming from a participant in the scene, who gives such emphasis and particularity to details, and who is of unimpeachable character for truth and intelligence.

I can safely rest the reputation of that part of the North Carolina militia, under General Eaton, on these splendid tributes to their courage and firmness.

It establishes the fact that they had fired once and re-

*Lamb's History of the American Revolution, p. 561.

loaded and when the enemy were in forty paces were resting their rifles on the rails and aiming with the "nicest precision" at their foe. So appalling was their martial array that even the British veterans, who had faced so many dangers from Quebec to Camden, paused and stood aghast at the spectacle, and that only the magic voice of their commander, accompanied with his reckless exposure in their front, could prevail upon them to advance.

The "havoc" was great, says Lamb, and we may well believe it. Riflemen who could take a squirrel's head from the highest tree would not be likely to miss a scarlet uniform at forty paces.

In Foote's *Sketches of Virginia*, Second Series, p. 149, is a biography of the Rev. Samuel Houston, a Presbyterian minister, whose simple epitaph tells the story of his useful and honorable and pious life.

SACRED
TO THE MEMORY
OF THE
REV. SAMUEL HOUSTON,
WHO IN EARLY LIFE WAS A SOLDIER OF THE
REVOLUTION,
AND FOR 55 YEARS A FAITHFUL MINISTER OF THE
LORD JESUS CHRIST.
HE DIED ON THE 20TH DAY OF JANUARY, 1839,
AGED 81 YEARS.

Mr. Houston was a student at Lexington Academy but responded to a call for volunteers, and was one of General Stevens' command at this battle and kept a diary of his movements from February 26th to March 23rd, in which

rac related many interesting incidents. He was fond of telling the story of this battle, and thus describes its opening:

"The Virginia line was in the forest, the Carolina militia partly in the forest and partly in the skirt of the forest and partly behind the fence inclosing the open space, across which the British force was advancing with extended front.

"*According to orders* the Carolina line, when the enemy were *very near*, gave their fire, which on the *left of the British line was deadly*, and having repeated it, retreated. Some remained to give a *third fire* and some made such haste in retreat as to bring reproach upon themselves as deficient in bravery, while their neighbors behaved like heroes."

Here is a direct confirmation of Lamb's account of the "deadly fire" of Webster's brigade, and a positive assertion that the fire was "repeated," and that some remained to fire the third time, and that they acted "according to orders."

That there was haste in the retreat when it began, is conceded, but no military man or intelligent reader of the history of militia contests, would have expected it to be otherwise. The Virginians and North Carolinians, being undisciplined troops, were alike disorderly when retreating from the field. The North Carolinians had done all they were commanded or instructed to do, and hastened to the rear where they were ordered to rally again. Mr. Houston was frank and just as well as truthful, for in describing the advance of the British on Stevens' brigade, after the North Carolinians retreated, he relates as the first fact occurring that "Our brigade Major, Mr. Williams, fled."

The Rev. J. Henry Smith, D. D., one of the most distinguished ministers of the Presbyterian church in the South, and for twenty-five years pastor at Greensboro, has seen Mr. Houston in his old age and knew his character

well, and testifies to the great esteem and reverence in which he was held by all who knew him. He was one of the leading spirits of the Presbyterian church in Virginia in his day.

These men of North Carolina did their duty and after firing every shot possible, before the bayonet was upon them, *obeyed orders*, and retreated behind the second line, who were in readiness to give the enemy a similar reception.

On Butler's side of the road the North Carolina militia and Forbis' Volunteers gave the British a bloody repulse. The Scotch Highlanders, a regiment of Leslie's brigade, rested its left on the New Garden road and therefore was immediately in front of Butler's militia, chiefly from Orange, Granville and Guilford.

Captain Dugald Stuart who commanded a company in the 71st regiment (called "Scotch Highlanders") on that day, when writing to a relative in this country under date of October 25th, 1825, uses the following language:

"In the advance we received a very *deadly fire* from the Irish line of the American army, composed of their marksmen, lying on the ground *behind a rail fence*.

"*One half the Highlanders dropped on that spot*. There ought to be a very large tumulus on that spot where our men were buried."*

This letter was written by Captain Stuart to a relative in Guilford county who had suggested that most of the Highlanders had been killed in the charge on the Continental line and these particulars were given to correct that error.

The centre of the State had among its population, at that period, many Irish and Scotch-Irish, and for that reason the militia line was called the Irish line.

The tumulus to which Captain Stuart refers is no doubt

*Caruthers' Sketches, Second Series, p. 134.

the large grave, sixteen feet square, and six feet deep, near the Hoskins' residence, which was filled with the dead of the English army, thus confirming Capt. Stuart's memory in regard to it.

A further confirmation of this positive statement of Captain Stuart is an extract from "Brown's History of the Highland Clans" as quoted by Caruthers. Vol. 2, p. 134:

"The Americans covered by a fence in their front reserved their fire till the British were in thirty or forty paces, at which distance they opened a destructive fire, which annihilated nearly one-third of Webster's brigade."

The Highlanders, however, were under Leslie, instead of Webster, that day but joined Webster's left.

The Hessians were opposed by the left of Butler's men and the Volunteers under Forbis. These latter, Lee reluctantly confesses, were firm and never gave way except to sullenly and slowly retreat before the English bayonet and adhered to Campbell's command to the very last.

It was a North Carolina rifle that brought down the first English officer in this battle.

Colonel James Martin in his petition for a pension thus describes the scene:

"I was posted on the front line with a company commanded by Captain Forbis, a brave, undaunted fellow. We were posted behind a fence and I told the men to sit down until the British who were advancing, came near enough to shoot. When they came within about 100 yards, a British officer with a drawn sword was driving up his men. I asked Captain Forbis if he could take him down. He said he could for he had a good rifle. I told him to let him come in fifty yards and then take him down, which he did. It was a Captain of the British army."

It was stated by Peter Rife of Virginia, one of Lee's Legion, to Caruthers, that he witnessed the fact with his

own eyes, that the men of Alamance fired till the Hessians mounted the fence and then clubbed their rifles and fought them back, hand to hand. When asked if this was not done by Campbell's men, he replied indignantly, "No, it was the North Carolinians. I sat on my horse and saw them with my own eyes."

There was deadly work there. At the foot of yonder ancient poplar, in full view of us, now sacred from the woodman's axe, fell that "brave, undaunted fellow" pierced by one bullet in his neck and another through his thigh, and by his side lay Thomas Wiley and William Paisley, whose descendants still live among us.

The granite monument at the foot of the poplar is the second raised to the memory of Capt. Forbis by his grateful countrymen. This noble patriot, after his fall, was pierced with a bayonet by a cowardly tory and lay upon the ground all night through the dreadful storm that ensued. He was found next day by Miss Montgomery and carried to his home on a horse. Refusing to submit to the amputation of his leg, mortification took place and he died several weeks after the battle.*

It is perhaps a gratification to know that "Shoemaker," the Tory who thrust the bayonet through Forbis' body, was caught not long thereafter and was soon dangling at the end of a rope and died the death of a felon.

With this record history of officers and privates on both sides, who participated in the battle, and the testimony of historians, who were observers of and actors in the scenes, I confidently submit that the North Carolina militia obeyed their orders to give *two deliberate fires and retreat*, and the omission to state this order, as both Johnson and Col. Lee have so unjustly done in their histories, has been the cause of the greatest wrong to North Carolina; but any North Carolinian who care-

*Communicated to me by the family

fully reads Johnson's numerous exposures of Lee's "surprising general inaccuracies" and observes the perversion of facts and the misrepresentations of history by Johnson, himself, in regard to North Carolina, will not be surprised at the unpardonable and unjust omission to state this order of General Greene. The omission, to an intelligent mind, seems, in the face of the testimony to be studied and intentional. There can be no reasonable excuse for it.

Lee has not hesitated to indulge in vituperation in regard to the North Carolina militia, characterizing their retreat as "desertion;" but when the Virginia militia fled from the field and left Greene's camp he speaks of Greene's army as being "reduced by the *flight* of the North Carolinians, and the voluntary and customary return of the Virginia militia to their homes. Such effrontery is refreshing and provokes a smile.

North Carolinians, according to this, fled *en masse* and it was "desertion," but when the Virginians repeated it so often as to become "customary" it was no longer dishonorable.

The fact is that a larger proportion of North Carolinians rallied after the battle,* than Virginians. I quote from Rev. Mr. Houston's Journal of the 17th of March to show how this "customary return to their homes" was made.

"*Saturday, the 17th.* On account of the want of some of our blankets and some other clothing, many postponed returning-home, which was talked of, in general, in McDowell's batallion, till at last they agreed and many went off: a few were remaining when Gen. Lawson came *and raged very much*: about 10 o'clock *all* but McDowell came off."

They left in the face of a "raging" officer's protest. This savors of "desertion" whether "customary" or not.

* Johnson, Vol. I, p. 162.

I do not make an attack on the Virginians, many of whom did their duty nobly on this field; but when we are traduced by invidious comparisons, it is due to history that the facts should be stated. Colonel Lee, himself, has been severely censured by Johnson for his conduct in this battle;* but I refrain from commenting upon charges which may be unjust to a man, who was one of the best partisan officers in Greene's command. I only strike in defence.

Having digressed from the narrative in order to vindicate the truth of history and repel the aspersions on the North Carolina militia, I resume the story of the battle.

When the militia gave way before the bayonet on the right, Webster pushed his advance in the forest but was met by a shower of bullets on his left flank, from Kirkwood's Delawares and Lynch's Riflemen and was compelled to face the Thirty-third to the north and repel the assault, while the Twenty-third took position on the left made vacant by this move, and the Second Battalion of Guards under O'Hara filled the gap by filing in on the right of the Twenty-third and next to the road.

On the south of the road, Leslie advanced rapidly into the forest for protection from the riflemen of Campbell, Winston, Armstrong and Preston on their right flank, and passed many of the riflemen, who fired deadly volleys upon them from flank and rear. So destructive was this fire that Lieutenant Colonel Norton, of the first battalion of guards, who was in reserve, came speedily into line and attacked the riflemen, while the Hessians under Dubuys were faced south and in a right angle to their first line and attacked Lee's Legion which was on Campbell's right. The conflict here was stubborn and hotly contested. The riflemen gave way to the bayonet, and reloading, returned to the charge, and firing from trees

* Johnson, Vol. 2, p. 14-20.

in every direction, soon routed the guards and drove them back to the skirt of the woods.

The Hessians made more progress on Campbell's right and pressed the Volunteers back in the direction of the "Ross Residence," and the riflemen fell back with them. It was at this period of the battle that Cornwallis, riding into the midst of the Guards and leading them back to the charge, had his iron-grey horse shot under him at the spot now indicated by a very large persimmon tree, a few hundred yards in front of us, which still lives.*

It was by this combined charge of the Hessians and the Guards that Campbell's men were driven south and entirely separated from the left flank of Stevens' brigade, upon which they were ordered to form in case of retreat. Cornwallis, leaving the Hessians to contend with the North Carolina and Virginia riflemen, recalled Norton, and with his Guards and the 71st Scotch Highlanders, charged Stevens' brigade, while Webster assaulted Lawson on the left. Lawson gave way early, as his troops were raw militia, and only lost one man killed. Washington, however, protected their retreat and they swung around on their left into the forest in the rear of Stevens to avoid the fields where Tarleton might fall upon them, and thus made their way to the Court House.

Webster, having driven Lawson from his front, and the flanking detachment under Washington having retired to the Continental line, the British moved along the left of the road rapidly, until they reached the Bruce road in

*NOTE.—Lamb relates the following incident as having occurred just after the retreat of Eaton's brigade, on the north of the New garden road.

"On the instant, however, I saw Lord Cornwallis riding across the clear ground. His Lordship was mounted on a dragoon's horse, his own having been shot, the saddle-bags were under the creature's belly, which much retarded his progress, owing to the vast quantity of underwood that was spread over the ground; his Lordship was evidently unconscious of his danger. I immediately laid hold of the bridle of his horse and turned his head. I then mentioned to him that if his Lordship had pursued the same direction he would, in a few moments, have been surrounded by the enemy, and perhaps cut to pieces or captured. I continued to run along the side of the horse, keeping the bridle in my hand, until his Lordship gained the 23rd regiment, which was at that time drawn up in the skirt of the woods."—p. 332.

the edge of the old field about 300 yards to the east of us, where he discovered the Continental line across the ravine on the opposite hill. Flushed with victory and eager to lead the advance and complete the destruction of Greene's army, Colonel Webster formed the Thirty-Third into line, the second battalion of Guards not being up, and with this regiment charged the Continentals.

The first Maryland, under Colonel Gunby, received the charge with cool and determined courage, firing a deadly volley in the British line at forty paces, which mortally wounded Colonel Webster and threw them into confusion, then following their fire with the bayonet, as they did at Cowpens, they fell upon the enemy and completely routed them, pursuing them back into the forest.

General Greene, not knowing the fate of Campbell, who had been driven nearly a mile to the South, though still fighting, hesitated to advance his whole line, fearing that he might be cut off on his left flank, and therefore ordered the first Maryland to fall back to their original position.

Here, Tarleton says, Greene lost the battle, by not following up this advantage and severing the British army in twain, but the distrust that Greene had of raw troops, induced him to choose the wiser and safer plan by which he could save his army if he was compelled to retreat.

While Gunby was retiring from the pursuit of Webster, Lieutenant Colonel Stewart, with the Guards (General O'Hara having been wounded) had arrived at the old field, and without waiting for orders, charged the second Maryland, under Colonel Ford, whose left rested on the rivulet at the foot of the hill. The second Maryland made but a feeble resistance and fled, but at this critical moment, the first Maryland struck the Guards on their left flank with the bayonet, and while they turned to

resist this unexpected attack, Washington, who was on the hill, in the new Salisbury road, descended the slope, crossing the rivulet and charged the guards in the rear. The slaughter was terrific.*

Peter Francisco the giant, of Captain Watkin's Virginia cavalry, killed eleven British soldiers with his terrible sabre. It was a valley of death and the Guards refusing to surrender were being cut down on every hand. Never soldiers fought with more desperation and courage than these devoted and gallant men. One cannot read the story without admiration for their courage and devotion to the Crown.

There Lieutenant-Colonel James Stewart came in contact with Captain John Smith, of the first Maryland and they recognized each other as having crossed swords at Cowpens. The duel was renewed. Stewart thrust at him with his sword. Smith parried it with his left arm and with his right swung aloft his heavy sabre which in its descent cleft the skull of Stewart to the neck.†

Cornwallis, descending the hill, saw that a desperate remedy was necessary, and riding up to the artillery, which had now arrived at the Bruce Road, he commanded MacLeod to open on the melee with grape shot. Near

*NOTE.—The third escape from danger by Lord Cornwallis, took place, at the foot of the steep hill just beyond the fork of the Bruce road, near the ancient white oak which still marks the spot.

Cornwallis came down from his post where the Salisbury (New Garden) road enters to the hollow to see the condition of the battle, and under the cover of the smoke, rode up to that old oak, just in the skirts of the fiery contest. Washington who had drawn off his troops, was hovering round to watch his opportunity for another onset and approached that same oak unperceived by his Lordship; stopping to beckon on his men to move and intercept the officer, then unknown to him, he happened to strike his unlaced helmet from his head. While he dismounted to recover it, a round of grape from the British artillery so grievously wounded the officer next in command to Washington, that incapacitating him to manage his horse, the animal wheeled around and carried him off the field, followed by the rest of the cavalry who, unhappily, supposed that the movement had been directed. Thus Cornwallis escaped.

*See Appendix B.

the guns lay General O'Hara, the Brigade Commander of the Guards, bleeding with many wounds. He turned his pale face to the British Commander and begged that his brave soldiers should not be killed by their own guns; but Cornwallis was in desperate and dreadful earnest, and repeated the sanguinary order, while O'Hara hid his face in his hands and wept. The remedy was awful but effectual. The Americans were compelled to retreat and the few bleeding Guards that were left made their way out from the scene of carnage.*

Greene reformed his line, placing the first two pieces of artillery in the New Garden road, with the First Maryland on its right, then the other two six-pounders and in regular order Kirkwood's Delawares and Hawes and Green's Virginia regiments—the last forming the extreme right of the line.

Washington's Cavalry was in the concave side of this semi-circular line, in the rear, so as to act as emergency might require. He was the ubiquitous and intrepid soldier, rough, but awful in combat, whose sabre had left its mark on Tarleton at Cowpens, and he was now panting to renew the conflict.

"Col. Washington is described as being six feet in height, broad, stout and corpulent. Bold in the field, careless in the camp; kind to his soldiers; harassing to his enemies; gay and good humored, with an upright and a generous hand, a universal favorite."—Irving's *Life of Washington*, Vol. 4, p. 44.

Cornwallis, under fire of his artillery and a musketry fusillade, formed his line anew. The Thirty-third had

*NOTE—Johnson also relates the narrow escape made by General Greene during the fight with the Continental line, as follows:

"Such also had been the apprehensions for the consequences of the defeat of the Second Battalion of the Guards, that the First Battalion had been ordered up from the left and had reached the New Garden road on which Greene was anxiously observing the progress of events. The bush on the roadside had so effectually concealed the advance of this corps from view that Gen. Greene had approached within a few paces of them, when they were discovered by his aid, Major Morris, and pointed out to him. He had the presence of mind to retire in a walk; a precipitate movement would, probably, have drawn upon him a volley of musketry."

been rallied, the Twentieth-third was in line with the Seventy-first and Norton on its right and the few survivors of the First Battalion of Guards, refusing to be held back, came also to the front. With the loss of the First Maryland, and knowing nothing of the fate of Lee and Campbell, General Greene determined not to risk his whole Continental line in a last desperate struggle but rather to retreat and hold them strong and fresh as a nucleus, around which he could gather his scattered militia and organize for another battle if the enemy dared to advance.

Throwing Green's regiment of Virginians, who had not yet been brought into action, in the rear, to cover his retreat, he with few across Hunting Creek and took the road to McQuistian's bridge on Reedy Fork. Cornwallis made a demonstration of pursuit, but a few shots from Green's regiment and a charge from the cavalry under Washington, caused Tarleton to halt and return to camp.

The artillery was necessarily left in the enemy's possession as the horses had all been killed and there was no way to carry off the guns.

The fight with Campbell's men had been steadily kept up and the Hessians had been driven back in confusion, when Tarleton was sent to their aid.

For some reason, hitherto unexplained, Lee withdrew his Legion and left Campbell and the North Carolina and Virginia riflemen exposed to Tarleton's cavalry and they were soon ridden down and compelled to disperse. * Colonel Campbell was greatly incensed at Lee's abandonment of the riflemen, and shortly after the battle retired in disgust from the army.*

Johnson says that Lee came to the Court House and was a spectator of the struggle in the old field between the British Regulars and the Continentals but never

*Drapers's Kings Mountain and its Heroes, p. 394.

offered assistance or made his presence known. He retreated by the High Rock road and his fate was unknown for twenty-four hours, until he rode into the American camp next day.[†]

To Washington's cavalry, the North Carolina and Virginia riflemen on the left, and the first Maryland regiment, with Kirkwood's Delawares, are due the highest honors of this day so fruitful in all that constitutes victory to the American Arms.

Greene halted three miles from the battle field for rest and to allow his stragglers to gather in. He was so prostrated with the long and arduous labors through which he had been passing for weeks that in this hour of relaxation he fainted from sheer exhaustion and for awhile was unconscious. He wrote his wife after the battle that he had not taken off his clothes for six weeks.

Cornwallis, who had but little means of transportation, and a very scant supply of provisions and medicines, found his ammunition nearly exhausted and more than one-third of his force, over 600, killed or wounded. Stewart was cold in death, O'Hara and Howard wounded and sick, Webster, the pride of the army, valiant in battle and wise in council, had received a mortal wound, and the mournful spectacle of the dead and dying on every hand was enough to dishearten the British Commander. He gathered his wounded as best he could, and buried his dead, and realizing that his only safety now was in flight, he left the field on the 17th and, placing those of his wounded whom he could not transport, in care of the humane Quakers at New Garden Meeting House, he hastened to put the Deep River between him and his adversary and gave no rest to his feet until he reached the forks of that river, at Ramsey's

[†] Johnson, Vol. 2, p 20.

Mill. Here he could burn a bridge behind him on either stream as necessity required. From thence he fled to Wilmington, leaving the corpse of Webster in North Carolina, near Elizabethtown. He had died in passing through the town while swung in a litter between two horses. He literally died in the flight.

The next morning after the battle, as was the English custom, Cornwallis sent his officers to the few prisoners he had captured with offers of liberty and money if they would join his service. They had been confined all that dreary, rainy, cold night in a rail pen, herded like cattle, and listened to these appeals with silence and sullenness. They were then told that the American army had been routed and Greene had fled from the State, but still these staunch old Whigs, drenched with rain and shivering with cold, maintained their stolid indifference.

Just then the sound of the morning guns from Greene's camp came reverberating from the hills.

An old Tar Heel who had squatted in a corner of the rail pen heard the familiar signal, and rising with a smile, he cried out: "LISTEN BOYS! THE OLD COCK IS CROWING AGAIN," and a shout of defiance went up from the rail pen that convinced the English officer that patriotism in the old North State was above the temptation of bribery or the intimidation of British power.

That "old cock" Nathanael Greene, and the "blue hen's chickens" around him continued to crow until Cornwallis was admonished of his sins and his danger and prepared for flight.

Eager to meet the American army which he had been pursuing for two months through mud and rain; thirsting for the glory of annihilating his foe, Cornwallis had marched out from his camp with fluttering banners and martial music to accept the challenge of the American General; he looked with pride on the veteran soldiers of

his line and the splendid officers who led them: the half clad soldiers of the American army and the untutored militia of the State were contemptible in his eyes; the scene at Camden was to be repeated, the militia would flee at his approach, the Continentals would be outnumbered and crushed and Tarleton would revenge the defeat of Cowpens by putting the retreating masses to the sword. Greene would forsake the field and find a refuge in the mountains of Virginia and the Royal Government would be restored in North Carolina.

These were the exultant visions that floated before his lordship's eyes as he gave the command "forward for Guilford Court House."

He sought the American army and advanced upon the militia but he found them in "forty paces with their rifles resting on the rails and aiming with the "nicest precision" at his line, and the next moment there was "havoc" in Webster's brigade. He looked to the right and witnessed half the Highlanders drop; he galloped his charger into the midst of the fight but in a moment was unhorsed by the riflemen on the flank; in fury he rode to the valley where his guards were weltering in blood and returned to shoot them down in promiscuous carnage with his own guns, he called for Webster to lead the last charge for victory but found him in the hands of the surgeon; he looked for O'Hara and saw him bleeding at his side; to the inquiry for Gen. Howard came the response "wounded and carried to the rear;" gazing anxiously at the Guards who were emerging from the smoke and carnage under the hill, he missed the stalwart figure of Stewart, now stiff and cold in death. Still he hoped for the realization of his dreams when he saw the Americans turn from the field of blood and calling for Tarleton, he ordered him to charge the retreating foe. Tarleton came with a rifle ball through his hand, but was met by Green and Wash-

ington and hurled back to his commander with disordered ranks.

The visions of glory had vanished; the truth came rushing over his mind that the victor of this battle was not the man who held the field, and that the ground on which he stood would soon become the scene of his captivity if he tarried to rest his bleeding comrades.

Greene had lost but three hundred and twenty [320] men and by the evening of the 17th, he found still around him 1350 Continental soldiers, more than 1500 militia and the 600 riflemen, and on the 18th, began the pursuit of the British commander.

An American officer relates that his compassion was so excited by the pitiable condition of the English army that he had no heart to strike them a blow. The roadside was strewn with the dead who had vainly tried to drag their wounded bodies along with the retreating army.

The march was tracked by the blood that flowed from the wounds of those who were borne in litters, and here and there a soldier, wounded and forsaken, begged for mercy and protection. When pressed in their camp at Ramsey's Mill, they made a hurried flight across the bridge and burned it behind them. Reaching Cross Creek his lordship expected to glide safely down the Cape Fear in boats but found Lillington's militia lining the river and ready to pick off his men from every covering on the banks. Sadly he resumed his mournful march and only found safety under his guns at Wilmington.

Cornwallis had boasted in the spring of 1780 that he was only waiting for the harvest to ripen in North Carolina to subsist his troops and he would then hasten to effect its subjection. The harvest had ripened but his lordship had not garnered the sheaves: he came to the fields of Mecklenburg but a voice from Kings Mountain sent

dismay and terror to the hearts of his reapers and they forsook the State.

Another spring had come with its sunshine and warmth and the earth was waiting for the seed. The furrows were drawn but the sowers were freemen still: the summer came and patriots rested undismayed under the shade of their own vines and fig trees: no royal standard floated over their heads and North Carolina still was free. Georgia and South Carolina were trodden under foot but the proud hearts of the "Old North State" were never humbled before the British throne. They declared for liberty and maintained it unsubdued to the end. The Battle of Guilford Court House made it impossible that another British soldier should invade her soil, and thenceforth she had peace and rest and a free government for her people.

No longer able to maintain the conflict in the Carolinas, his lordship continued his flight to Yorktown and before the frosts of October had tinged the leaves of the forest, he marched out of his breast-works an humbled and heart broken captive, and with the surrender of his army came independence to the colonies.

The fatal wound, to royal authority from which it lingered, and lingering died, on the 19th day of October, 1781, was given on the spot where we are now assembled to do honor to the men who accomplished the deed.

It is sacred ground and worthy of our veneration and affection, worthy to be reclaimed from the hand of desolation and decay and adorned by the artist with monuments as imperishable as the memory of those heroes who were made immortal here.

There was not a tree of this noble forest that did not give shelter to the riflemen who contended against English bayonets on this bloody field. And we may appro-

priately paraphrase the verse of Morris with all its pathetic tenderness and truth,—

“ Woodman, spare that tree;
Touch not a single bough :
It helped to make us free,
And we'll protect it now.”

Let us hold it as a sacred heritage from our fathers; as a shrine of liberty where all may worship in the generations which shall continue to the end of time.

At the close of JUDGE SCHENCK'S Historical Oration, Governor A. M. SCALES was introduced, who said:

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Enough has been said. A new chapter has been added to the history of the Guilford Battle Ground, and now, after more than one hundred years, the conduct and fame of the North Carolina militia have been vindicated. Hitherto North Carolinians, acquiescing in a history made up at the time from rumors, rather than facts, have been subjected to humiliation and mortification when ever this, one of the most important battles of the Revolution, was mentioned.

When, as a boy at school in the town of Greensboro, I roamed over this field in search of war relics, it was in honor of the brave men who fought and died here in defence of liberty; but I had no reverence, love or respect for the memory of the great body of North Carolina militia, who, the history of that day taught me, threw away their arms and basely fled on the approach of the enemy, without firing a shot.

The battle ground itself has been neglected and left without a monument to mark the spot, save its desolation. It has been reserved for my distinguished friend, Judge Schenck, the orator of the day—more distinguished to-day than ever before—to uncover the truth of history and tell the tale of this battle as it was actually fought. He it was, that while a comparative stranger to our people, though a native North Carolinian, conceived the idea of forming the Guilford Battle Ground Company, to purchase and adorn the grounds. He it was who

raised the money that was necessary, contributing a large share thereof himself, to investigate the truth of history, and he it is that by patient and wide research and months of incessant labor collected the evidence from friends and foes, at home and abroad, which has enabled him to wipe out forever the stain that rested upon our home militia. In the name of the descendants of these brave men, in the name of our great State, I thank him for this great work.

I am gratified to see so large an audience gathered together on this occasion, giving unmistakeable evidence of the deep interest felt by them in a battle fought by their fathers over one hundred years ago in defence of a united people and a common country. It tells me in language not to be mistaken that notwithstanding our late troubles we are still in heart, as well as in fact, one undivided people. God grant that when another hundred years have passed, he who shall stand here to celebrate this day, may still look upon a people free, happy and united.

APPENDIX A.

Col. Lee had observed that, "Had General Greene known how severely his enemy was crippled, and that the corps under Lee had fought their way to the continental line, he would certainly have continued the conflict; and, in all probability, would have made it a drawn day, if not have secured to himself the victory."

Why was General Greene not informed on those two points?

Col. Lee could have foreseen the weight of responsibility which this observation casts on himself. The first would have soon been discovered by the General, had time been allowed to make the necessary observations; and this time was denied by the rapid approach of the regiment of Boze on his exposed wing.

Had Col. Lee, therefore, continued to occupy the regiment of Boze, by means of the Light Corps, it would have allowed the American commander the time and leisure necessary to reconnoitre the remaining strength of the enemy.

And as to the second point, from whom ought the information to have come, but Col. Lee himself?

There was no want of time on his part, for he informs us, that his cavalry and infantry had both been sent off before the movement of Col. Tarleton to that quarter; and even the riflemen of Campbell, who seemed to have been left to shift for themselves, would most probably have reached the vicinity of the American left sooner than the extricated regiment of Hessians.

The cavalry and Col. Lee himself certainly did reach the rear of the American left, before the regiment of

Boze; and this important piece of information could have been communicated, either by message, or more properly, by a junction with the left of the American army.

That this was not done, is acknowledged by Col. Lee, and could be proved, if necessary, by other evidence; and its not being done, certainly leaves Col. Lee exposed to the charge, which he attributes to the want of intelligence in the American commander.

Nay, the acknowledged, and otherwise well known fact, of his having retreated by another route, leaves himself also exposed to the charge of separating from the possible fate of the army, and thereby adding to its difficulties and exposure—*Johnson's Life of Greene, Vol. 2, p. 20.*

APPENDIX B.

Two combatants particularly attracted the attention of those around them. These were Colonel Stuart of the Guards; and Captain John Smith of the Marylanders—both men conspicuous for nerve and sinew. They had also met before on some occasion and had vowed that their next meeting should end in blood. Regardless of the bayonets that were clashing around them they rushed at each other with a fury that admitted of but one result. The quick pass of Stuart's small sword was skillfully put by with the left hand, while the heavy sabre of his antagonist cleft the Briton to the spine. In one moment the American was prostrate on the lifeless body of his enemy; and in the next was pressed beneath the weight of a soldier who had brought him to the ground. These are not imaginary incidents—they are related on the best authority. A ball discharged at Smith's head as his sword descended on that of Stuart had grazed it, and brought him to the ground, at the instant that the bayonet of a favorite soldier, who always sought the side of his captain in the hour of danger, pierced the heart of one who appears to have been equally watchful over the safety of the British colonel. This incident, it will be found in the sequel of these sketches, was productive of some interesting consequences.—*Johnson's Life of Greene*, Vol. 2.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS,
WASHINGTON, D. C., June 1st, 1888.

Dear Sir: I have at last discovered Colonel James Stuart's family. He was the fifth son of Robert Stuart, seventh Baron Blantyre, in the Peerage of Scotland. The present Baron Blantyre is his grand nephew. I have not been able to find the date of his birth. His eldest brother, the eighth Baron was born in 1725 or 1726. His father died in 1743. The family residence are Lennoxlore, Haddington, and Erskine House, Renfrewshire, some ten miles below Glasgow on the Clyde. When killed at Guilford he held the rank of Captain and Lieutenant-Colonel in the First Regiment of Foot Guards. I can find no trace of his having been married.

With regards, Yours faithfully,

DAVID HUTCHESON,
Assistant Librarian

HON. D. SCHENCK,
Greensboro, N. C.



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